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Education Leads the Way

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OUR recent years of economic and other depressions have dealt roughly with the prestige of many institutions that flourished almost unhindered in the epoch when the Great American Dream seemed on the verge of realization. Among these institutions is the school or college of education, led by Teachers College at Columbia, which derived its inspiration largely from John Dewey. Sharply, sometimes unfairly, criticized by the faculties of other divisions of the American university, the school of education advanced from triumph to triumph till it attained almost unlimited control of primary and secondary education and looked upon higher education as a new world to be conquered. Perhaps its first serious setback occurred when, in 1930, Abraham Flexner published a brilliant book* comparing American with British and German universities, a book probably more widely read and discussed by intelligent persons than any other yet written in this country on the subject of education.

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* It was taken so seriously that a whole issue of the *Journal of Higher Education* was devoted to a series of reviews of the book. All of them were superficial in comparison with a review-article by Philip S. Richards in *The Nineteenth Century and After*.

Acknowledging that education might be transformed into a profession nourished by cultural roots and high ideals, Mr. Flexner declared that in fact the educationists had simply lost their heads, running into "all kinds of excesses, all kinds of superficiality and immediacy, all kinds of 'rabbitt paths' ". At Columbia, Johns Hopkins, Chicago, Harvard, Yale, and elsewhere, he was impressed, above all, with the "hordes of professors and instructors possessing meagre intellectual background whose interests centre in technique and administration viewed in a narrow *ad hoc* fashion", and with the "trivial and uninteresting character of educational periodicals and the subjects of the dissertations submitted for higher degrees". With merciless satiric intent he revealed such subjects as "Administrative Problems of the High School Cafeteria", "An Analysis of Janitor Service in Elementary Schools", "The Intelligence of Orphan Children in Texas", and "Concerning Our Girls and What They Tell Us". If not wholly just in his selection of data, Mr. Flexner described fairly enough the ruling spirit of a movement conspicuously lacking a sense of humour or proportion.

The institution which led this movement—Teachers College, Columbia University—has remained the largest and most influential of its kind in the country. Its staff, as Mr. Flexner finds, setting aside scores of teachers in the extension department, summer school, et cetera, "requires 26 pages for mere enumeration: the roster contains 303 instructors; the catalogue lists over 19,000 'students' of one kind or another". What Teachers College believes in is usually believed in a little later by the crudest teachers' college in the country.

II

What does Teachers College believe in today? What does Columbia University now think of the achievement of professional education during the past two decades, and what does it propose as the great task of education in the coming time? The answer is plain in a collaborative work* by seven writers, five of whom are in New York (four at Columbia), edited by a leading professor of education in Teachers College. In respect to past achievement, these writers admit fundamental failure; in respect to future achievement, they promise everything. They have repented; they have seen the light; they will show us the light. Education, it seems, must lead the way to the new social order for which the world is yearning: the Great American Dream will yet come true.

Before turning to the dream, let us review the present reality. With a candour begotten of a new and holier zeal, the authors of this book make bold to break the idols still worshipped by the mass of educationists.

(1) They condemn the bloated curriculum resulting from widening knowledge and from the pressure of persons calling for one new "service" after another. "If, for example, the pressure for a new subject, like music or art or commercial geography, became suf-

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* THE EDUCATIONAL FRONTIER *by William H. Kilpatrick (ed.), Boyd H. Bode, John L. Childs, H. Gordon Hullfish, John Dewey, R. B. Rapp, and V. T. Thayer.* (CENTURY. 319 pp. $2.50)

ficiently strong, the situation was met by the expedient of adding new courses and special teachers. If children were found to have no proper sense of the value of money, school banks and lessons in thrift were provided. If patriotism became a matter of concern, flag drills. . . ." The possibilities were endless, and the curriculum came to resemble the offering of a huge department store.

(2) They condemn the departmental walls that separated subjects and rendered the whole system chaotic and meaningless. The curriculum became "a reflection of various specific and correspondingly unrelated interests existing outside the school". In each subject, objectives were pursued in disregard of the objectives of the other subjects.

(3) They condemn the consequence of such education, namely, "insensitiveness to contradictions in beliefs and practices", which is characteristic of our society. "A business man, for example, who has become thoroughly grounded in the notion of business as based on competition and as being incompatible with sentiment, joins the Rotary Club, where he absorbs the idea that business should be conducted in the spirit of service." Again, traditional religion and traditional culture do not harmonize, nor do religion and modern science, "despite all the 'reconciliations' that have come off the press". Behind the contradictions in our lives lie the contradictions in our education, the various elements of which "tend to neutralize one another, and so the final result is apathy or intellectual and emotional paralysis".

(4) They condemn the educationists' obsession with science. For science alone, these writers make

clear, cannot overcome our apathy or paralysis; indeed, it is a partial cause rather than a remedy. As science developed, intelligent purpose diminished. "The conception of education as centering on a way of life no longer dominated. . . . The ideal of knowledge for its own sake proved to be stronger than the notion of knowledge as a means to a way of life." Hence it has come about today that those educators who are most absorbed in scientific method are the very ones who are least sensitive to the need of a significant education. In most of our schools knowledge "has been treated as accumulation of information with little reference to perceived bearing of what is acquired"; and it has often been subordinated to "automatic skill", that is, "repetition of actions in which more emphasis is placed on mechanical accuracy than on understanding". In other words, " 'efficiency' in doing has been made a goal irrespective of *what* efficiency is for". Whatever the causes, the fact is that, notwithstanding the prominence of the natural sciences in our educational system and the general devotion to scientific technique, we have not succeeded in making of science "the organ of everyday ways of thinking in formation of beliefs. It is not a part of the popular mind. The ways of thought of the latter remain much as they were before the rise of science. . . . Conclusions of science are accepted for the most part on authority".

(5) They condemn, specifically, the obsession of educationists with pedagogical method. Our salvation does not lie in "the abstractions of the learning process, the measured achievement in particular subject-matters, the intelligence quotients of the young, or

detailed methods in class-room management and teaching". "We have been so intent upon getting facts", indeed, "that we have failed to see that facts serve purposes." Professor Hullfish complains: "Textbooks have been constructed in mere informational terms; teaching activities have been formulated with the express purpose of drilling these terms into the students; administrative functions have been developed that place a premium upon teaching which successfully fixes the terms; and our scientific development in the field of the measurement of results has glorified both the administrator and the teacher whose activities bring large masses of students quickly up to the informational levels which the tester, assuming that informational accumulations set the ends of education, has established. All of this may be splendid for the administrators and thrilling for the testers; but we are beginning to realize what we should always have known, that it is deadening and fruitless for both the student and the teacher."

We turn from this misguided orthodoxy only to confront another. Professor Kilpatrick complains that educationists who have abandoned training in information for training in habits and skills have been equally responsive to the lure of mechanical efficiency. To find ways of producing "specific items of habit and skill" which the young might need in adult years, scholars in education gave their energy largely to devising "specialized techniques and specific procedures". "Measurement, which is most at home in dealing with specific items, has reinforced the tendency; and science, in whose name this kind of work has been done, has added its approving prestige. Since our effort has been to devise such techniques and procedures as minimize the need of thinking, the appeal has, from this and other causes, met a wide response. If thinking could be done once and for all by a few experts and the results embodied in easily managed techniques, then, so the advocates of this position have thought, there need be no worry if teachers do not think. . . . If a curriculum could be made at the top and thus handed down, and if standardized tests could measure the output, then managerial 'efficiency' would become as available for the school system as for any business organization."

This chimera was pursued, as Professor Kilpatrick indicates, in the name of science. But the psychology upon which the educationists rested was, as he says, inadequate, and their pretension to a secure science of education unfounded. They affirmed that they began with the facts. "Upon such a sure beginning scientific procedures could, it was claimed, in time advance to the unquestioned settlement of all our problems, and on this theory a whole educational programme has been based. Here we need simply say that no such claim has been justified, that the claim itself is less and less clearly made, and that its direct opposite is increasingly accepted."

(6) They condemn the invasion of American education by an exaggerated utilitarianism. "In the wake of science came technological and industrial development, bringing with it new demands on education. . . . Defence for these new departures was made chiefly on the ground that they embodied applications of scientific method and had practical utility. In other words, utility, like science, began to insist on its own

standards of value. Utility meant pecuniary profit, with no nonsense about it." Lacking "depth and intellectual substance", practical and vocational subjects were introduced "for the superficial purpose of enabling individuals to 'adjust' themselves externally to a profit-seeking civilization". Training of this sort "therefore has all the miseducative effects of our present social-economic situation. To turn the practical interests of the student into specific vocational channels, as these now exist, is to place both the individual and the school at the mercy of an industrial order not interested in education."

Apparently, the ideal of knowledge for its own sake turned out to be too austere for genuine acceptance, and was soon overwhelmed by a lower ideal: that of practical training for the sake of practical (*i.e.*, pecuniary) advantage in the jungle of industry and commerce. And we have allowed this sort of thing to pass for education in our whole system from the lower schools through the university.

(7) They condemn the illiberality and aimlessness of the college of liberal arts. "Its original unity of purpose has been completely lost. This fact can scarcely be disguised by vague talk about the 'breadth' or 'background' to be obtained from a college education. The vaunted 'breadth' is not so much breadth as a confusion of breadth with variety. . . . We teach a little of everything, and then we apparently expect the students to achieve out of the total mass of their learnings a synthesis which, up to the present, the college has been quite unable to achieve for itself." Instead of giving our students a world to live in, "we induce them into an intolerable confusion".

In this fundamental respect, the college has markedly deteriorated. "The time was when a liberal education meant the possession of a common body of knowledge and a common outlook on life." It aimed at a way of life. It may be traced from the Middle Ages, "those distant times" (terribly distant from the usual educationist) when culture meant saintliness. The Revival of Learning again mapped out a way of life: "the good life was made to centre on the appreciation of the languages, the spirit, and the cultural achievements of antiquity. The simplicity of this programme was, indeed, somewhat marred by the necessity of harmonizing it with the spirit of otherworldliness embodied in the medieval conception of saintliness. But after a time a reconciliation was somehow achieved, and so the way was prepared for the conception of the Christian gentleman, which became especially popular with denominational colleges and set a new pattern for education." The breaking up of this pattern is attributed, by Professor Bode, to the rise and development of science—far too simple an explanation. Whatever the forces at work, the writers of this book bear witness to the progressive insignificance of the liberal college and its failure today to offer any way of life, although their own evidence would seem to suggest that a definite pattern of a sort, the economic man, has supplanted the older patterns of the saint and the all-round man. After all, "pecuniary profit, with no nonsense about it" offers a programme—a way of education and of life, or at least a way of chaos.

One is bound to add (though the present authors do not) that there *is* much nonsense about it, much sentimental confusion between profit and service. In the luminous phrasing of Charles W. Eliot, we are training students "for power and service"—an anæsthetic application of the nineteenth-century theory that private profit is the public good. The really dangerous foe in education today is not science or mechanism or materialism, whose extravagances are patent to the authors of this book, but the unseen foe, pseudo-idealism, whose disarming ways beguile not only the Rotarian but also these humanitarian authors.

(8) They condemn, finally, the blindness of the educationists to the need of a social philosophy. In a one-sided and largely misguided addiction to scientific analysis, the educationists have avoided what is properly their central concern, "the building of an inclusive and criticized outlook upon life and education. No step in the educative process can be weighed or judged except in the light of such a point of view, itself always growing as each new problem is most thoughtfully faced. The building and use of a philosophy of education thus becomes the key aim in professional education". But the whole temper of professional education, the whole temper of Teachers College, Columbia University, has till now been one of unthinking acceptance of the *status quo*, one of indifference toward, sometimes contempt of, "ideas" as opposed to "facts", "philosophy" as opposed to "science". Is it not time for education, as these men at the Columbian frontier declare, to grapple with fundamental problems instead of disporting in the region of the peripheral? Is it not time for education, amid the whirl of new social forces, to get its bearings and adjust itself to tomorrow rather than today? Does not

the future of society depend upon the sort of school we have in the present, when the citizens of the future are being formed? In a word, should not education lead rather than follow?

III

So far, so good; if anything, too good, for these seven frontiersmen, in their zest for pushing on, deal rather hardly with their complacent colleagues. Now let us inquire whither they wish to push on, to what promised land they propose to lead us.

Remember that they are seeking a new human pattern, a new conception of the good life, comparable with the Christian saint or the antique all-round man or the attempted fusion of the two in the Christian gentleman. What pattern do they offer in place of these outmoded conceptions?

The answer is: None. "At a later time [how long, O Lord?] the emphasis may be on 'the good life', that we may learn better to live." Meanwhile, we are to live as at present—as well, or as badly. The formulation of a new vision of the good life, it is expressly stated, must await the "radical reconstruction" of the economic structure. The present pattern, the economic man, is to be continued; only, it is to be socialized.

IV

"If we could establish a social programme, in the manner of Russia, our educational problems would largely disappear." Inasmuch as we have today "no respectable philosophy of democracy at all", it should be easy enough for a new social programme inspired by Bolshevism to pass under the old name of democracy so dear to the hearts of Americans. Since "recognition of the rights of the common man is the basic article of our national faith", communism, of one sort or another, is really the goal toward which the Fathers were obscurely striving. Like many other persons suffering from the strain of the present crisis in American civilization, the authors of this book conceive that our ills demand a radical remedy, and the radical remedy which they unflinchingly choose is a planned society, an industrial system *not* "based on competition and motivated by the desire of personal profit".

Mere liberalism, they think, does not go far enough. The liberal creed formerly professed by educationists insofar as they were intellectuals, our Columbia prophets declare to be bankrupt. "While we share some things in common with those liberals, we still differ radically on one fundamental point. They recognized certain evils and sought through reform measures of honesty in politics, the fair deal, industrial democracy, and the like to remedy these evils. We recognize the same evils, but we believe them deeper rooted than these liberals saw, namely, in the very structure of our *laissez faire* profits system economy." In the radiant spirit of Jacobinism, our new educationists assure us that "economic planning run ultimately by all for the good of all offers a real basis for getting rid of dishonesty and poverty and insecurity, all at the same time". Bad institutions, as Rousseau declared long ago, are the root of evil; substitute good ones, and evil withers away. Such is the utopian solution of the ancient problem of evil which Columbia has just discovered. If evil is more deeply rooted than the liberals saw, it may also be more deeply rooted than the radicals see, namely, in human nature itself, which remains to be dealt with under any system whatsoever. The remedy, so far as any exists, would seem to lie in the reform of individuals, and the ethical function of education would seem to consist in the development of individual integrity, not in the furtherance of social innovations.

In turning to social solutions these authors are, as they conceive, acting not as citizens merely but as educationists, in view of the fact that education is a force working outside as well as within the school and even working mainly outside the school. The greatest educational force, they remind us, is society itself. It follows that if education, in the full sense, is to be different from what it now is, society will first have to be different: the social revolution thus becomes the business of professional education. There will be scant progress till educationists and educators "catch the social vision" and obey "the social imperative". Hence the word *social* is repeated in this book (as in how many discussions today) till it becomes a sort of incantation, a warm feeling rather than a concept, a form of mysticism or hypnotism. What does it mean?

Well, it means "shared activity". It means "abundant cultural development for all", it means "a high culture in which all and not merely a few shall share". Such phrases appear to be more definite, but in truth they too stand for a generous emotionality rather than clear thought. What are we to understand by *abundant*, by *all*, by *high*? Is the high culture of the future to be as high as in the great epochs of history, or is it to be, in comparison, mediocre? *All* is a large word; do these prophets really believe that all can attain a high or even a mediocre culture? In view of the prevailing verdicts of supposedly scientific thought in such fields as biology, psychology, and political science, this is chimerical. In view of common sense, it is equally chimerical. So long as we continue to speak in such unrealistic terms, so long as our "uplifting and impelling vision" rests upon a faith that flouts the facts of life, the Great American Dream of the humanitarians will remain what it is—a dream. The facts, whether we like them or not, would seem to show that in society at its best, comparatively few can attain a high culture, a large group can attain a mediocre culture, and a very large group can attain a low culture. The real question at issue is whether, in a society governed by equalitarian dogmas, *any* can attain a high culture.

And how is the shared activity proposed by our pioneer theorists to be practically inculcated? Their answer is, on the negative side, by the demolition of the "competitive motive" which today operates in the school as in society. "Marks, grades, scholarship contests, honor-rolls, and the like are today reputable incentives", but we must come to see that their effect is disastrous because they perpetuate the dominating motive of the social order that socialism is going to reject. Trying to get ahead of others, whether in business or in Latin or in foot-racing, is to be viewed as immoral. Competition in any form (not merely the pecuniary) is to be extirpated from human nature.

On the constructive side, much may be done "by providing opportunities, appropriate to varying age levels, for students to practise service to others as a part of their normal school activity. Occasions for this are so plentiful in the school situation that they will occur to all who admit the need for taking advantage of them. And occasions may be created where they do not now exist to establish meaningful lines of communication and inter-relationship involving service for others with people and conditions outside the school." The basis for this indoctrination in service already exists, it is pointed out, by virtue of that multiplication of vocational subjects which is to be deplored only when it looks toward private profit, not when it is directed toward social ends. Vocational subjects must be made to reveal the social nature of vocations, though the approach may be individual. "As individuals are oriented in their world, each may be expected to be captured by aspects of it that lie close to budding interests. Each, therefore, will start with his own centre of orientation. Modelling in clay, work in wood or metals, the use of water-colours or oils, the making of linoleum blocks, studied care of all manner of small animals, reading, writing in both verse and prose, the comparison of soils, the collection of information bearing on the control of health", and so forth, and so forth—indeed the world is so full of a number of things. By means of anything—animals or linoleum—pupils may be innocently directed toward social contagion; one can rest assured that they will soon catch the vision.

Here is how the idea is to be carried out. "A student with an interest in type might be permitted to participate in a useful way in the work of a printing establishment. But this does not mean that the school can be satisfied if the sole result of such activity by the student is an innocuous dabbling in the affairs of the plant. Participation that leads to nothing more significant than this has already been too much on the educational horizon. The school, therefore, will need to exercise care in order that the activity may be educative. The type interest for the student must be but a starting point. From it may emerge continuing interests: the history of printing, present processes of lithographing or block printing, the illumination of pages, binding, machine processes, even a study of the language itself. And as each interest is followed, man will be seen not only gaining control over his forms of communication, but also contributing to a changed society in which old economic and social attitudes, like old printing processes, are inapplicable." The child starts with a piece of type; he ends with socialism. (Of course, he does nothing of the sort unless the new-style teachers "exercise care", seeing to it that their interests become his interests.) Or, to take another illustration, the child might be allowed to help in the control of a voting booth, where he would soon "get a realizing sense of the evils" of democracy; that might lead him to discover in himself an interest in democracy. This in turn (perhaps) "would lead him to history", and finally he would come to see "the necessity of further reconstructing" democracy "if we are to realize the American Dream in the life of the common man". The child starts with a ballot; he ends with socialism. Opportunities for reaching this Q. E. D. are limitless: "airports may be visited, ice-cream plants studied, factories surveyed, municipal officers interviewed. . . ."

Thus it will come about that little children, tactfully investigating the methods used by our *bourgeoisie* in the control of industry and politics, will catch a vision of the kingdom of Planned Society that is to be. Thus will education lead the way to the social revolution in America—that is, the first social revolution in America. Incessant change being the law of life, "the great danger and weakness in the Russian experiment is that no provision is made for the reconstruction of attitudes or beliefs as a means of progress". We Americans must look forward to a "continuous reconstruction".

For the philosophy that underlies this book is, of course, John Dewey's philosophy of experimentalism. "Since this book contains suggested criticism of certain scientific attitudes often found in the study of education, it may not be out of place to make our position clear. Not only do we not wish to disparage science: we reckon on the contrary that the conceptions and processes of modern science are probably the greatest achievement of the mind of man to date," —beside which the achievements of Homer and Shakespeare, Aristotle and Kant, Phidias and Michelangelo, Dante and the medieval architects, Bach and Beethoven render an inferior account of man's capacities (perhaps Jesus may be omitted, now that we have the science of religion). And among the conceptions and processes of modern science, the central feature is assuredly the experimental method—the key to the philosophy of education and to the progress of society. Using the experimental method, we are to analyse the total social situation in any given present time, and, having found the existing forces which might become the means to change, we are to select those which appear to lead toward a change that attracts us. This would seem to raise the pivotal question: What attracts us, and why?—a question that I cannot undertake to examine here.

In a fusion of this experimental method with a social or humanitarian urge, we are told, is to be found something that will satisfy the cravings of the human heart. "Faith in promotion of shared values and devotion to a constantly growing and varied method of experimentation will supply the void [fill the void?] which now exists in the life of so many individuals because of collapse of those objects of traditional loyalty which once held men together and once supplied meaning to individual life." There are to be no "fixed principles" such as the Russians have adopted, there are to be no fixities at all—except two: except the principle of sharing and the principle of experiment. Perhaps they can be reduced to one principle: the instrumental philosophy of John Dewey, good for all time if only the world will agree to adopt it.

Such is the naïve doctrine which the new educationists propose to inculcate from Teachers College to the teachers' colleges and ice-cream factories of America. To be sure, they deny that instrumentalism is "an instrument of indoctrination". On the contrary, it is a way of putting an end to the propaganda now going on. "At present there is an immense deal of actual indoctrination, partly overt and even more covert, in our schools. The outworn and irrelevant ideas of competitive private individualism, of *laissez faire*, of isolated competitive nationalism are all strenuously inculcated." This is true; these things are being inculcated. And other things are being inculcated, some of which may be valuable if not "instrumental". In demanding the abolition of all indoctrination, our Columbian authors disarmingly insist that they are "not proposing that other doctrines should be arbitrarily imposed in their place". The obvious logical catch, here, lies in the word *arbitrarily*; other doctrines are to be imposed not because they are arbitrary but because they are right. But they *are* to be imposed; for all education, whether instrumental or scholastic, sectarian or non-sectarian, scientific or humanistic, imposes at least a minimum of doctrines and attitudes. From this there is no escape. Common honesty should require us to acknowledge it.

Indoctrination rouses opposition. One of our authors observes truly that "the conflicts within our tradition are making it impossible for our schools to select either the *status quo* or some deviation therefrom without drawing fire from one side or the other. . . . Educators find that to be alive at all to their task of selection is to become targets for some differing or opposing interest." There you have it: educators must select. Having selected, they may either frankly announce what they believe in, or assume it while declaring neutrality. Overt or covert, an immense deal of actual indoctrination takes place in our schools and colleges, and must inevitably always take place. When it does not please us, we call it propaganda; when it does please us, we call it education.

V

I have already indicated that, as the authors of this book recognize, the old liberal education, with its common body of knowledge selected to the end of inculcating a certain way of life, has vanished, and that its place is occupied today by an illiberal education resulting in an intolerable confusion. While deploring this situation, they fail to provide a remedy.

They display the same scorn for subjects and subject-matter for which educationists have too often been notorious. If subjects there must be, subjects must have an "excuse", and this excuse cannot be that students need a common body of knowledge. For new-psychological and other reasons that notion had to be abandoned. "Subjects should not be required as vehicles in which all must ride regardless of where they desire to go. The school has discovered that it is futile to present the same organization of knowledge to all students, even within limited divisions of that knowledge." The real excuse for subjects is that they are vehicles in any of which each student, according to his spontaneous desires, may elect to ride. A given class of students should be allowed to ride in all directions. One student, noting the inadequacies of the school's radio set, will become interested in studying radio construction; another, noting the various foreign groups in the local population, will be inspired to study language; and another, noting the diet administered to white mice, will find in himself an enthusiasm for chemistry. Therefore Tom will specialize in radio, Dick in language, and Harry in chemistry. To expect Tom to study language, Dick to study radio, would be futile because of the fundamental differences which educational psychology has "discovered" between Tom and Dick. Accordingly, we find enthroned in the modernist school, not

Latin, history, and mathematics, but Tom, Dick, and Harry. These young specialists, with their disparate "budding interests", are the centre of attention, and should continue in that place when Tom, Dick, and Harry automatically move up from the lower schools to the college and perhaps the graduate school. Each individual, having found his hobby, is to ride it to the limit.

Nor is this all. In addition to finding a subject congenial to his idiosyncrasies, each individual is expected to work out for himself a reconstruction of values. "College education should be concerned primarily with the task of assisting every student to develop an independent philosophy of life." Upon entering college he should be regarded as an incipient researcher who, riding in his vehicle toward the confines of knowledge, and making detours or excursions into fields of knowledge related with his specialty, will somehow organize all that he learns into a significant reconstruction. "The reconstruction may be socially motivated to any degree, yet it remains a personal matter", for otherwise it may be the result of mere "herd action, in which the finest fruits of education are lost to sight". Can it be denied that the individual has a natural right to self-expression, whether in the selection of a field of learning or in the creation of a philosophy of life?

In pursuing this line of thought, this pluralistic conception of human nature and of education, our educationists are in substantial accord with a large proportion of American college and university teachers of "subjects". Individual differences, spontaneous choice, vocational motivation, research from the earliest possible time (the pre-school years, as some contend), education with a "kick", the adventure of learning, the joy of creative activity, the thrill of discovery, the inalienable right to a personal philosophy, yes, even a social gospel based on the assumption of continuous change—these have increasingly governed the thinking of our professoriate.

Is this view of individual liberty consistent with the usual doctrine of *The Educational Frontier* and the indoctrination therein aimed at? Is it harmonious with the view implied in a passage like this? "Our schools, and particularly our institutions of higher learning, are naturally supposed to be the appropriate agencies for clarifying our vision, for pointing the way to a good life. The expectation is reasonable, but unfortunately our schools are in precisely the same fix as our average man." In the minds of the authors there is, I think, no inconsistency. If they cannot conceive of a good life, at least they have a means of "*pointing the way*": the elimination of the competitive motive and of private profit. This is apparently what "*assisting* every student to develop an independent philosophy of life" comes to. Independence spells the experimental attitude, and the experimental attitude spells transcendence of our present economic and social order.

The practical workings of a view of education resting on individual differences are already plain enough. The individual differences are developed into a startling reality, while the social gospel remains a myth. There is ample external gregariousness, but scant inner community. For the effect of ever-increasing specialization, upon students as upon faculty, is the isolation of individuals from each other in their intellectual and spiritual life. This centrifugal force is not offset by any centripetal force, since the only effective part of the social gospel is its humanitarian insistence on the right of each individual to self-expression. The social gospel merely provides a sanction for the unsocial gospel. One hears a great deal in our universities, as in books by educationists at the frontier, of something that is called "social intelligence", a pleasant phrase that avoids any suggestion of feeling or will, a colourless phrase that does not affront the neutrality of science. But in fact social intelligence appears to be, like so much of the strict "rationalism" of the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, merely a dignified screen for sentimental humanitarianism. Specialists, more and more sundered from each other from pre-school days onward, are to come together somehow in emotional sympathy. Warped, contracted individuals are to flow into each other by an opening of the flood-gates of expansive brotherhood and service. As Professor Dewey has himself pointed out, our ordinary modern fraternalism is a camouflage for self-assertion. What more simple than to get rid of self-assertion by getting rid of its cause, which is such a trivial thing, viz., money, your money and my money? Once we do away with the profit motive, human nature may be trusted to blossom forth in all its primitive goodness, and everybody will want to see to it that everybody gets all there is of everything. The old utilitarian programme was: the greatest good of the greatest number (in practice it became: the least good of the greatest number). The new utilitarian programme shall be: the greatest good of all.

When the Declaration of Independence was written, it seemed enough to ask for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. When the disciples of John Dewey have inculcated their gospel, happiness will no longer be an object of pursuit. We shall have caught up with it. And change being the law of instrumentalism, it will then be necessary to experiment in quest of unhappiness.

The Backwoods Progression

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THE American backwoods is unique in history. It is the one feature, along with pioneering, that is common to the different sections of this no longer commonly-minded country. It is, in fact, the only common ancestor, for pioneering and settling are the successive stages of one movement. This is especially true of the early period in the great Southwest when the pioneer would settle, pull up his stakes, and settle again. And for Americans today, on those rare moments when they consider the past, the backwoods citizen, partly nomadic, partly agricultural, alone has any real meaning. His qualities of sheer physical strength, self-possession, and courage have been abstracted into a state of mind which gives directly to the big business man his ruthless drive, to the gangster a cruel realism, and to the walkers of asphalt a vicarious feeling of power which readily makes them tools of those who possess power. And his reported self-confidence and will to liberty have injected into the nation's foreign policy a strange combination of arrogance, naïveté, and greed—a combination which has regularly made our foreign office the dupe of astute European politicians. Because of this backwoods-pioneering figure's singular importance to us, he will probably epitomize North American civilization for world history as the crusader epitomizes Christian Feudalism. Such habits of mind and body were noble qualities for the backwoodsman; without them he would have perished; but as our only inheritance from the past, this backwoods spirit in its modern manifestation denotes a diseased body politic, a case of arrested growth in the public mind which forbids the establishment of any economic, political, or social stability.

It seems proper, at this time, when those mediums by which our common life was held together have broken down almost entirely, to examine into the historical implications of this legacy. When everybody lived in the woods, the term backwoods defined a peculiar sort of isolation, almost a half-savage autonomy. It was a fringe of near-anarchy to the agrarian society of Colonial times. Its contemporaneous meaning for the ruling gentry was a sort of lubberland. While running the line between Virginia and North Carolina, that English gentleman, William Byrd, commented that those backwoodsmen made

> their wives to rise out of their beds early in the Morning, at the same time that they lye and Snore, till the sun has run one third of his course, and disperst all the unwholesome Damps. Then, after Stretching and Yawning for half an Hour, they light their Pipes, and, under the Protection of a cloud of Smoak, venture out into the open air; tho' if it happens to be never so little cold, they quickly return Shivering into the Chimney corner. When the weather is mild, they stand leaning with both their arms upon cornfield fences, and gravely consider whether they had best go and take a Small Heat at the hough; but generally find reasons to put off til another time. Thus they loiter away their Lives, like Solomon's Sluggard, with their arms across, and at the Winding up of the Year Scarcely have Bread to Eat. To speak the

Truth, tis a thorough Aversion to Labor that makes People file off to N. Carolina, where Plenty and a Warm Sun confirm them in their Disposition to Laziness for their whole Lives.

Undoubtedly a great part of this first American backwoods was made up of such men: escaped indentured servants, men who were tired of living on poor lands, criminals, hunters, the nondescript. But this universal fear of falling under Virginian rule cannot be set down to congenital lassitude. "A thorough Aversion to Labor" is too glib a definition to fit the case. The backwoodsman's fears of aristocratic Virginia has a more profound significance. When so many appear lazy, the matter is not with the individual but with society; and the matter with Colonial society was the Tory gentleman's rule. Byrd voices the contempt held always by the oppressor for the oppressed. Change the antique spelling and it will at once become evident how closely his remarks resemble the current criticisms made by the city man about the farmer. The ploughman's bankruptcy, economic and spiritual, is laid to shiftlessness and ignorance, cardinal sins in the aggressive man's eye, to be punished by a most thorough exploitation.

The Colonial backwoods was the extension of an advanced stage of a European revolution; and the Colonial gentleman, like his English counterpart, was the agent of these disrupting forces which had been at work since the sixteenth century. The gradual disintegration of Feudalism, hastened by Henry VIII's lust, broke down by degrees the forms of the estates, reducing the Kingdom's subjects to the unrestrained mercy of the ruling will or wills, since power quickly slipped from mitre and sceptre. In feudal England the sovereignty had rested in Heaven; the King was God's overseer. But as the influence of the Church declined, he ceased to be the suzerain; dropped upon the defensive; and attempted to retain his position by absorbing in his private character the powers of sovereignty. This change progressed very rapidly through the Tudors, until rule by Divine Right took on with the Stuarts a very personal meaning. This house acted as if God had made it a present of the three kingdoms. Such a psychological change in the nature of the kingship would not have been understood before the Wars of the Roses. But certain sixteenth-century noble houses and most of the seventeenth-century commoners were quick to learn. The successful demands by these houses for a share in the church property confiscated by Henry VIII made their position in the State so strong that they were able to challenge the King's power. In the past the Church had seen to it that ambitious barons did not upset the social equilibrium; but there was no check now from distant Rome, and since the Church in England was responsible no longer to God but to the Government, those who might dictate its policies owned the British Isles as a cotton-planter owned his bale of cotton. This struggle with the Tudors and Stuarts, culminating in the Stuarts' overthrow, was the struggle with the king as a powerful individual over the new meaning of money. By the time of the Whig revolution of 1688 the idea of the State had completely changed in the English world.

The vanity of the Squirearchy and the upper yeomanry proved as great as that of the nobles and princes, until every beef-eating Englishman was saying, in imitation of Louis XIV, "I, too, am the State!"; and the Presbyterian and Puritan ethical societies made the logical transference of God's beneficence to their lay concerns. To say that the State exists for private property is to say that it exists for the private will. It then follows that any individual who is cunning enough, or powerful enough, or lucky enough, may make of the State, of a group of States, or even of the world, a possession answerable to the commands of his desire. This is the old war against the gods. Out of it came the moral revolution that changed the mediaeval concept of the economic commodity from the thing-to-be-used to the thing-to-be-sold: the revolution at the bottom of the anarchy of the modern world.

The enclosure of the lands common to landlord and peasant took away the basis for the peasant's economic freedom; and when the North American continent was discovered (the world was now a thing-to-be-sold), it served as a refuge for the disaffected and a new field to conquer for men already masters of the technique of conquest. It was against this exploitation that the backwoods in the new world, where the land to the West was plentiful, grew darkly on the fringe of Colonial society, for the Colonial backwoodsman was not one of the conquerors. He was fleeing from them—from the same sort of domestic conqueror he had encountered in the old world. For a land to be invaded as the Normans invaded Britain may result in a cultural metamorphosis. But the backwoods is evidence of decay.

At the same time, the Colonies themselves were large blocks of the English backwoods; and out of this condition of private exploitation came the American Revolution. The English Parliament, serving certain interests, did not have the imagination to visualize the temper of a people whose spirit of self-dependence had not been broken and could not be broken so long as there was plenty of unoccupied land. Because of this tremendous economic fact the exploiting gentry in the old world and their Tory allies in the new lost a continent. Liquors carry in their dregs the concentrated flavor of the drink; and the dregs of revolutionary society meant to share in the distribution of the continent. Their dissatisfaction with the Tory rule, shown explicitly in their fear of the Order of the Cincinnati, now took form in new theories of government springing from the natural-rights school. These theories crystallized around a new party, the early Republicans. Those who sought to continue the system of exploitation quickly formed a party, the Federalists, in opposition to the so-called Mob demands.

It was apparent that wise leaders could put this discontent with the old rule to noble uses. Jefferson came forward, and for one precious moment he and his supporters had it in their power to correct the mistakes of the Whig revolt of 1688. But Jefferson's political philosophy turned out to be inadequate to the changed set of circumstances; his strategy worse, although tactically he often displayed brilliance. His line of attack was an abstraction, the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The Federalists opposed to this a concrete, well-organized array of property rights. The weak point in Jefferson's defense was his own belief in a distorted conception of property, albeit a specific kind, landed property and the kind of life it supported. This meant that his political activity concerned itself fundamentally with the same thing the Federalists espoused: the principle that the chief duty of the State is the protection of the property of individuals and aggregates of individuals. This is certainly one duty of government, but only as a means of guaranteeing the security and self-perpetuation of the family. Prohibiting kings, then allowing private citizens to own the State is certainly hopping from a very slow pan to a very hot fire. Instead of laying the broad foundations a State needs to rest upon—and these foundations are best laid upon the dogma of one religion—he raised the question as to which will, the middle-class or the agrarian, would own the continent.

He did not intend this. He hoped to produce a stable farming society, predominantly yeoman, in which the head of every family might be assured of an independent living for his dependents and the promise of security for his posterity. Much of Jefferson's special legislation—especially the abandonment of primogeniture and the separation of Church and State—contradicted his general idea and obstructed the establishment of the agrarian State. He placed his faith in a central government which would be the trustee for a league of free commonwealths, a trustee which would interfere as little as possible with the private wills, the yeoman Olympuses, scattered throughout the sovereign States. He managed to destroy the Federalist Party but incorporated, because of this faulty strategy, its most dangerous elements into the Republican ranks. And so the balance between the State governments and the central government, within the central government itself, was never definitely secured. By placing this security in the hands of delegates who had only their political acumen to protect them from the more concerted middle-class designs, he postponed settlement to the future. Before his death he was to see the enemy dressing in the garment of free government to overcome more easily its principles. Like all eighteenth-century liberals he and his chief lieutenants were confused. The temporal policies of a Church which had been thrown down had perplexed their minds on religion and its corruption. It is difficult to know how far an individual is responsible for the times and the times are responsible for the individual. The scriptural admonition makes a partial answer: "For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh."

But with revolutionary grants in their pockets, confident in their new power, great bodies of Jefferson's followers marched upon the Western wilderness. The words "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" rang through the legislative halls at Philadelphia; but life, property, and the pursuit of wealth gleamed in the eyes of these adventurers. This was the beginning of the great period of pioneering. The movement grew to tremendous proportions, re-enforced by Scotch-Irish and German immigrants and by Eastern-shore planters whose lands had become exhausted by an extravagant cultivation. There were numerous hazards: the Indians, the French and Spanish intrigues, drought, hunger, and the crouching panther. But most formidable of all, was the hazard which they did not visualize—that postponed issue: where would the power ultimately lie, in the Eastern cities or on the Western and Southern farms?

The lower Mississippi basin, and the region north of the Ohio now became the West. In a remarkably short time farms and plantations appeared in the wilderness, and the new ground stumps remained to tell of the conquest. Two backwoods grew up: the local backwoods, and the West as the backwoods of the nation. The first was made up of those men who had lost out in the scramble for the best land. These men, in the main, were thrust into the mountains and upon barren soils—although the "Barrens" were later shown to have adequate fertility for a good living. Because of frontier conditions, there was at this early time little difference in the way of life between these and the more fortunate land-grabbers. Everybody was on the make, and no man questioned his destiny. This first group would become conscious of a backwoods status as the pioneering ways were polished away and the planter stood out to define the form of polity growing from frontier chaos. But it is the West as backwoods, as an agrarian state of mind, opposed to the middle-class state of mind, that is the concern of this essay. On account of Republican failure, from now until the War between the North and South, the West would struggle to hold its conquests against the rising power of the new capitalism.

As this struggle over the nature of American society increased with a population pushing back the Colonial boundaries, the two opposing schools began to head up in sections. The South and West became predominantly agricultural. The East, because of its seaport cities, and later its industrial towns, became the base for capitalist operations. At an early stage it became evident that the South, with its intelligent planting class, would furnish the leadership for an agrarian school. The West, still in a transitional stage, divided, according to the interest of the moment, its allegiance. But since it was primarily a farming section, ultimately its proper course would be to ally itself with the South, unless by shortsightedness it should make an Eastern alliance, an alliance which would begin with the appearance of a partnership but would inevitably end by making of the West a creature of the bankers and capitalists. At the turn of the century the field was set. The first six decades marked the periods of this, the most critical phase of the struggle.

The settlers, as they passed by large bodies of fertile Western land owned by speculators in the older states, were faced at the outset with the tactics of the enemy. The Yazoo fraud, an attempt to steal the states of Alabama and Mississippi from Georgia, showed how little the delegated authority of the people might be trusted. But it also showed the backwoods what kind of leadership it might rely upon. John Randolph of Roanoke, the aristocratic planter, not Jefferson the political theorist, rose up as the defender of the faith. He understood that the success of this fraud would imperil those institutions which offered security to the farming life, for the fraud meant traffic in the public domain at the expense of the people for the aggrandizement of the few. This was no Federalist ghost he was raising from the grave. Without his strenuous and sustained attack upon these speculators in millions of acres they would undoubtedly have succeeded in their designs, for they brought to bear upon the Government the strongest pressure. Jefferson had hamstrung himself with the all-Federalist-all-Republican doctrine. He undoubtedly meant that all were to be Republicans; but the fraud, spreading even to his cabinet, told another meaning. At the time, Randolph was spokesman for Jefferson in the House. This meant that he had to buck his own Party, a Party as completely at the call of the executive as it is now under Roosevelt. His rigid defense of principle was at the expense of his career; and later, when he tried to uphold the dignity of the legislative branch and curtail the growing power of the executive—to preserve the fine state of balances in the Constitution—he practically prepared for his political suicide. He could not be read out of the Party, because his principles were ostensibly those of the Republicans; but from this time on he was gradually thrown upon his own. He remained powerful for the next ten years, and he was feared. Never did those measures which tended to sacrifice principle to expediency go unchallenged by him: the embargoes, standing armies, war, speculation, and the tariffs. He had seen, from the beginning, "the poison under the wing" of the American eagle. His long, withering finger struck terror to the hearts of many men; but it fell limp and helpless before that dangerous Federalist, John Marshall, seated on the Chief Justice's bench. Randolph overthrew the Yazoo men; but in overthrowing them, he divided a strength needed later to preserve the idea of the Union as a partnership between sovereign states.

In trying to keep the Ship of State afloat during squalls from foreign parts, Jefferson and Madison neglected domestic principles, until dissension spread into mutiny. The embargoes and later the War of 1812 ruined New England's shipping and turned her capital towards manufacturing. At the conclusion of hostilities the factories demanded protection. The depleted currency and the debt contracted to prosecute the war made the richest ground for patronage, a National Bank, and the sectional taxation of the Southern planter and farmer. Randolph had foretold these conditions with Cassandra-like prophecies. The metamorphosis of prophecy into reality took place before the eyes of the backwoods wing with magical speed. The task which would absorb the energies of the Constitutional defenders for the next forty years lost its opacity, and the added difficulties became apparent by degrees. The crib door had been left open and its lock broken. It would require heroic exertions to fasten it again, after the stock had found where the corn was stored and rats had slipped in to nest and breed. Randolph found an ally in the person of John Taylor of Caroline County, Virginia. They became the two most powerful figures in the backwoods camp for the first twenty years of the new century. Calhoun, a young man just entering political life, should have stood beside the conservatives. Instead he and Clay became the lights of the Administration and the foremost instigators for war. Randolph said one day to a friend, "They have entered this House with their eye on the Presidency, and mark my words, sir, we shall have war before the end of the session!"

Taylor redefined the conflict and put the issues where they belonged, between the agronomy of the Union and the incipient industrialism of the East. In answer to John Adams, who had proposed a balance between aristocracy, monarchy, and the Third Estate as the means of giving security to the State, he replied that such a balance no longer applied. The only real danger now was from what Taylor termed the aristocracy of the third age: a rule of paper and patronage. In his *Inquiry into the Principles and Policy of the Government of the United States* he posited the "confession" of this aristocracy:

> Our purpose is to settle wealth and power upon a minority. It will be accomplished by a national debt, paper corporations, and offices, civil and military. These will condense king, lords, and commons, a monied faction, and an armed faction, in one interest. This interest must subsist upon another, or perish. The other interest is national, to govern and pilfer, which is our object; and its accomplishment consists in getting the utmost a nation can pay. Such a state of success can only be maintained by armies, to be paid by the nation and commanded by this minority, by corrupting talents and courage; by terrifying timidity, by inflicting penalties on the weak and friendless, and by distracting the majority with deceitful professions. That with which our project commences, is invariably a promise to get a nation out of debt; but the invariable effect of it is, to plunge it irretrievably into debt.

This precise summation of the exploiting-capitalistic policy was to need no new terms for a hundred years. It will serve today as the basic premises which inform this interest's action.

This "confession" was published in 1814. Another treatise, *Tyranny Exposed*, points out in detail the fallacy of the manufacturers' report calling for more manufacturing and higher protection. In these volumes and others Taylor states the exact grounds of conflict between the two theories of society, dismissing irrelevant and confusing arguments. He makes the philosophical defense of agrarianism; but it is because it is a philosophical defense that it fails. His truth, that good government cannot come from bad moral principles and that the American centralizing principle is bad (as it certainly was at that time) cannot be denied; but like Jefferson, he fails to offer a medium by which the bad may be destroyed and the good set up and maintained. He can only appeal to the intelligence of the voter for the remedy. Liberalism inevitably used the terms good and bad. It needed, as a fighting cry, virtue triumphing over evil. Cromwell's leadership was shrewder. He did not concentrate on discussions of the morality of the Stuarts. He threw his Ironsides against the devil's agents.

Although philosophy proved a handicap to Jefferson, Taylor, and men of their class, the form of the plantocracy, given a tremendous impetus by the rise of cotton and the spread of negro slavery into the West, shaped Southern and Southwestern society into a feudalism, greatly different from European feudalism, but preserving the inertia and fixing the form so that the European tradition could be preserved. The planter ceased to be the small farmer's oppressor as in Colonial days. The conditions had changed. He had now an alien race to serve him. His interest was identical with that of the small farmer and the plain man generally, since they all were the objects of capitalistic exploitation. And the plain men, or dog-run class—a name taken from the form of dwelling universally used by this class—furnished vigorous recruits to the plantocracy. The vocabulary of the gentleman gradually changed from that of liberalism to a speech more proper to his social rôle, the rôle of the First Estate. The planter stood in place of the feudal lord; the general movement in the place of the suzerain; and the Jeffersonian farmer in the place of the yeoman. These lines had become so generally fixed by 1830 as to be officially announced through the Pro-Slavery arguments of Dew, Harper, Hammond, and others. So, in spite of the fact that liberalism made the effort to found a State on capitalistic private property, a Southern nation began slowly to grow up in the changing Union.

But this growth into a social and spiritual unity continued, until the South's destruction, to be retarded by the handicaps which have been discussed. Its blind devotion to the Union would lead Northern politicians to say that it could not be kicked out. It was thrown on the defensive from the beginning, and its only hope of survival was an intelligently directed offence. Its churches were brought together on the matter of slavery, but its politicians never could agree upon any common action. While tariffs and the criticisms of its institutions tended to emphasize for the West its bond with the South, under Clay's advice the West was so eager to develop that it gave heavy support to the centralizing interests in return for subsidies and internal improvements. When the South-West eventually found out that these gifts from a consolidated government were intended, like the corn thrown out to the hogs, to make the killing more profitable, it was too late to do more than reflect upon its own stupidity. The two most persistent and effective attacks against the backwoods were made by means of the tariffs and abolition, the one economic, the other moral. Protection was first in time, although the abolition agitation was soon coupled with it when it became apparent that the tariffs alone would not destroy the South. South Carolina, under the prompting of such men as Rhett and Hammond, made such active opposition that the great leader of the state, Calhoun, abandoned his nationalistic stand and proposed his Nullification theory of redress. Andrew Jackson's romantic idea of the Union and his dislike of Calhoun joined together in his stubborn mind to play him into the hands of the enemy. Although he had destroyed the National Bank, he threatened to send troops into Carolina to make tariff collections. For a moment war seemed inevitable; but Henry Clay came forward with a compromise. Calhoun accepted it. The Congress voted favourably on Jackson's force bill, and voted to reduce the tariff. Two great blows to State rights were struck at once. The South got temporary relief, and for this relief agreed to a sacrifice of principle. There can be no compromise between two antithetical ways of life. What appears a compromise is a postponement of the issue. The South, by accepting this postponement, doomed itself to ruin. The high prejudices of his heart and a limited political vision led Jackson to squander the great strategic moment by which his backwoods could have established its rule. Like a good backwoodsman, he took "the responsibility" and Calhoun refused it; but the South, not Calhoun or Jackson, suffered the consequences.

There was after this only one avenue left open to the South–secession. Calhoun still hoped to concentrate Southern leadership and make the fight within the Union. But his plans of effecting his ends by controlling the Democratic Party failed. With desperation he took up a last position, secession through the common action of all the Southern States. But Clay's American plan–an extension of capitalism–and his compromises, the god of all opportunists, had done their work. In this crisis Calhoun's chief lieutenant, Robert Barnwell Rhett, proposed a policy of coercion. He contended that if one State acted separately, the other States, all believing in their own sovereignty, would follow the lead. He supported his contention by reminding his political peers that the revolt against England did not take place until the tea had been thrown into Boston Harbour. When common action did take place, it came about by South Carolina's single-handed withdrawal; but it came ten years too late and brought Appomattox, not independence.

The fall of the Confederacy removed the last great check to the imperialism of Big Business. The Northwest, having been induced to aid in the overthrow of its natural ally, was to pay for this action by its servility to Eastern capital. The Northern Democrats, who had been naïve enough to think they had been fighting for the Union, began to renew their connections with the Southern branch of the Party. This reunion would have turned the government over to the Democratic will. The Radical Republicans saw at once the "fruits of victory" about to vanish into air; so they set to work again the reliable abolition propaganda and spread the news that the planter was reenslaving the Negro. This brought popular support to the radical reconstruction programme and allowed Stevens to disfranchise the white South and enfranchise the Negro. The Negro was told his freedom would last as long as he voted the Republican ticket. In this way the South became a pocket borough for the capitalist party; and the Northern Democrats discovered for whom they had been fighting the War. But the white South was not to be reduced so easily. Out of economic, political, and social chaos, under the sting of defeat, in the face of a victorious enemy, and with troops quartered in the land, it recaptured the machinery of government through the Ku Klux Klan and re-established its control. It was the last and the most remarkable display of political genius its planting feudalism would show.

But victory was only temporary. The capitalist interest, with its railroads through the Far West and its growing industrial enterprises, was able to consolidate its gains and begin that conquest of the North American continent which had been so long delayed. Its tactics were simple and effective. They were relearned from Clay who had absorbed them from the Biddles of his day: hold out a lure of wealth; allow a few to gain it; and the rest, with this will-o'-the-wisp before their eyes, will be satisfied with the system and lend it support with their labours and talents. Not for one moment did the real power slip from the hands of those who intended to keep it.

Such was the policy the capitalists carried into the war-exhausted South and, having failed in supplanting the whites, they began to corrupt them. A New South, repudiating the beliefs and economy of the Old, was expounded from the platforms which had once heard the call of States Rights and Secession. Southern men like Henry Grady, Lanier, Watterson, and the young men who listened to them, counselled the South to get on the bandwagon. The Democratic Party abandoned its original principles and played the under dog at the rich man's table, grabbing what crumbs it could. It was reduced to making gestures against the exploitation which it was unable to curb: power is the twin brother of wealth, and wealth no longer belonged to agrarian descendants. Cities grew, industrial not cultural cities; farming population diminished. Henry George, in an effort to check the business, aroused a momentary flare of rebellion with his concept of land as common property; but he was too late to do more than cry the ruin of the experiment in liberty. The Populist Party, grounding itself on too scant a foundation, quickly subsided into defeat. Both efforts were the laboured, violent gasps of death. The mortal injury had been done in 1865.

The full significance of what had happened and what was happening was not understood at the time. There was still plenty of empty land into which the dispossessed might go. But in the meantime the shores of the Pacific have been reached. It is no longer possible for a general migration to get under way in an effort to escape the dominant factor in American civilization. Nevertheless, the backwoods still rises up, although the trees are little in evidence. It is not trees which define the backwoods. They were the physical properties, along with the Indians, the wild animals, and the treacherous rivers, which once formed the setting. Today it is different. There is, indeed, no setting. The backwoods of a full-fledged industrial society is without location. The long hunter's shadow has ceased to glide upon the bending prairie grass but his spiritual heir, the tramp, on wheels, on foot, is always in motion, driven without direction because there is no longer any place to go.

But the tramp is only the symbol for the outcasts created by the paper system. All those who have been discarded, who have been supplanted by the increase of machines, who consciously rebel against the slavery of technology; the unemployed of factory, mill, and farm; and, in a small degree, the hangers-on in the mountainous districts—all Ishmaels thrown upon the constantly changing scene, driven by a vague nostalgia to wander upon the face of a continent—it is these who make up the mass of this century's backwoodsmen. As their numbers increase, their rulers become more baffled. Their frame of mind is dangerously close to that of the Tory gentleman's.

And a situation similar to that which destroyed the Tory gentleman is generating itself again. The middle-class concept of property has triumphed in a far grander way than Hamilton ever dreamed it would. But the increasing confusion which follows its swelling up indicates inevitable failure. The State, through which a people expresses its destiny, cannot stand on such a basis. Property no more makes a State than a bed makes a marriage. Man begins to think he is a god, but he has only unshackled his will. A curious, modern Prometheus, he has stolen no living but an abstract fire; and all the energy of his filched knowledge must go to replenish a liver, food for the insatiable appetite of Time the Vulture, drawn to the jailrock by the odour of the crime. Like the successful pickpocket the modern industrialist lives by his wits. He dreams and boasts of riding the four million horses of power. If he were not blinded by this delusion, he would see that he had seated himself upon the back of the communal flying jennet, whose wooden tail and mane are given to an abstract breeze. Others of like mind he sees to his front, seated safely in a chariot or gleefully on a pig that does not squeal. Around and around they go, until the machine stops.

The common admiration for the ambitious man and the contempt for the unambitious come to us as direct results. The ideal of progress promises so much that he who refuses to enter the race is only a craven, puny being who must be thrust quickly into the ranks, where he can be used. One must use, or be used. The myth of the backwoodsman rises from the past and hovers near, an inspiration to encourage the modern American when the fight grows hard. This ancestral giant reduced the strongholds of nature, the endless woods of gloomy oak and impenetrable cane; he rode upon the surface of wilderness rivers; he crushed the Indians; he cleared away forests and planted seedbeds around the slow rotting stumps. If he did these things, might not his descendants crush obstacles just as great, riding the backs of the proletariat and the farmer?

The ancient capitalist policy of "corrupting talents and courage . . . terrifying timidity . . . inflicting penalties on the weak and friendless . . . distracting the majority with deceitful professions" has finally reduced the Southern scene to a unit of the general scene—but with a difference. Historically it is still the seat of opposition. It has become the fashion to forget this; but fashions change; tradition lodges in the blood. That is to say, tradition holds to the great body of people who live according to custom and not in chameleon style. It is no more possible for Southern people to remove this element of their tradition than it would be for certain of their old and distinguished families to open their arteries and let out the tainted African blood which for generations has commingled democratically and darkly with the purer strains. The words of its local industrial leaders which deny this tradition are empty words. They can never extract it from Southern consciousness. Leader is not the term to apply to these modern strong men and their literary and scholarly sycophants. They are the modern scalawags who have cut themselves off from the country-side and withdrawn into the cities, where they openly acknowledge their servile dependence upon New York. For a small share of the booty, comparable to the share of the cotton crop formerly allowed to the overseer by the planter, they have either consciously or unconsciously become the sucking mouths of those industrial octopuses whose long arms wrap about the "provinces".

Whatever they have done to this section economically, they have not succeeded in emasculating it spiritually. As long as the great body of people, still living chiefly in the country, feel that there is something about the South which no other section can claim; as long as its people go, though stumblingly, in the ways of their fathers; in different language, as long as tradition, sullen and inarticulate, continues to flow through their cultural expression, it remains possible that at some future date circumstance may produce genuine leadership which will express this feeling of separate destiny. And then such leaders may not fail as Jefferson, as Randolph, as Taylor, as Calhoun, as Jefferson Davis, failed. The recent fall of its hereditary enemy, the Republican party, may mean much or nothing. Mr. Roosevelt's attempt to give security to the economic life of this country has not, as yet, had time to show its effect. But unless he succeeds in destroying the great moneyed interests and re-establishing the farming classes in their former dignity and independence, his concentration of power in the executive branch will only facilitate the establishment of a servile state.

But if the ascendency of the middle class has not destroyed the agrarian South, it has done it great damage. The share-cropping relation between landlord and tenant was an effort, after the war, to bind together what seemed a disintegrating world. Industrialism has made it the worst sort of tyranny, for unfortunately emancipation did not free the Negro. It merely rendered the landlord impotent, enslaving both classes by substituting the money economy for the planting agronomy—economic foundations of great difference in meaning for society, in spite of the fact that the planter grew to power from the factory demand for cotton. What set him apart from the industrial mechanism was his feudal organism which could produce for consumption even while producing for exchange. If it had not been disrupted by war, it would have stood without strikes, or unemployment, even if the demand for cotton had failed.

But the share-cropping system is not feudal. In spite of its barter element it is fundamentally industrial. It is built almost entirely around the money crop. The only thing in common between the different participants is money, which means that there are several elaborate medias of mutual exploitation. The planter is able through the furnishing system to make it impossible for the tenant to do more than make a bare living. On the other hand the tenant, to protect himself, has learned a most intricate method of theft. And no family will attempt to take care of land some other family may farm next season. But it goes further than this. The landlord soon finds himself in the hands of the local banker, who is dependent upon a larger banker, who, in turn, is dependent upon the New York clearing house. This is the final commentary upon the early effort to establish a State upon private wills. But even so, the relation between the man who owns the land and the man who rents it has much of the old-time goodwill. And when an injustice is protested or a trade is made the two parties have the great advantage of being able to see each other and discuss such subjects in person.

Another important economic and social loss has occurred. Before the war the sturdy Jeffersonian yeomanry furnished its best men to enlarge the planting class. Now the best are drawn away from the country, going either to the Northern or to the Southern city, the one being about as bad as the other. Those of this class who are left on the land have largely lost their independent position by moving in as tenants on the modern plantations. The small farmer has by no means disappeared, however. There are many of them scattered over the South who still work for themselves. Although they have become implicated in the system, they manage to live with a reasonable amount of security. They have their money crops, but in times of depression they naturally tend to spend more hours on making a living and less on the more hazardous production of these crops. So long as they can feed, warm, house, and clothe their families, they practice a partial freedom. At least they may expect more security than any other branch of the industrial army. However, their position in the State is always hazardous, for they exercise so little control over the machinery of government that the defeat of the internationally-minded bankers would carry them along in the common ruin.

The prevailing concept of private property prohibits the middle-class moneyed princes from becoming rulers in any sense except in the possession of an irresponsible power. Their economics are bad; their morals worse; and their common sense has long been dead. The recent depression has shown how puny are their hands when the four million wild horses get out of control. The nearest that they come to social usefulness is an eccentric philanthropy, and this philanthropy must inevitably remain unsocial because of its private and whimsical nature. It is not a power which resides in the body of the people, delegated to the rulers for the common good; nor a power handed down from a society resting in the Godhead of some religion. It is a power transferred from the people to individuals, until the state has become not a protector of private property everywhere but a protector of a few men who have monopolized an impersonalized wealth. Having once become "mastered", this wealth becomes a monster apart from its owners, though driving them. There is never any rest, for the greater it becomes the greater grows the number of those who would change places with those who nominally control it. The man is nothing. The thing is everything. In this lies its inevitable destruction, and in this lies the germ of the universal condition of servitude that logically follows the breakdown of the capitalist state. For this reason the Socialist or Communist state is not at all "radical" but a rationalization of the drift of the present system, though in this country there are indications that we may skip a communistic or socialistic polity and be metamorphosed into the Caesarian condition of servility.

The New England elders, the patroons, and the Tory gentlemen of the South had an outward fringe of people for their backwoods. This aristocracy of paper has a section, the South, for its backwoods. It is as confused, as inchoate, as apparently degraded as those inhabitants of William Byrd's lubberland; but though it may "lye and Snore", it is still potentially powerful. It represents the only group of states in this country with enough form left to shake off their lethargy when the walls of steel and concrete tumble down upon our heads; when the electric webs break loose from their poles to dart and sting like scorpions.

The Pseudo-Science of Economics

SILVESTER HUMPHRIES

THE philosophers of the eighteenth century created a study of the social order in its economic aspect. The fruit of their researches was developed in the nineteenth century under the name of Political Economy, which was included among the sciences. Precisely to what extent, if any, there is an "economic science" is a topic worthy of examination; and by the publication of M. Vialatoux's *Philosophie économique** many suggestive lines of thought are presented.

The mental background of the founders of economics—Stewart, Petty, Locke, Adam Smith in England, and the Physiocrats in France—was the work principally of Bacon and Descartes. The former asserted the value of inductive logic in the formation of sciences, thereby following Aristotle (whose work it was his ambition to consummate); he formulated a new abstraction of the sciences, based on the method of knowing, not on the object known (thereby deserting Aristotle and founding the peculiar heresy of English philosophy).

Descartes and Galileo habituated men to identify science with exactitude, and exactitude with mathematics, so that "scientific", when the word was coined, meant "statistically measurable", and not "pertaining to essences". What could not be stated numerically came to be underrated in the order of knowledge itself.

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* **Paris: Éditions Spès.**

This fallacy needs first to be disposed of. Mathematics, the science of quantitative being, is a most noble pursuit of man. Physics, the science of the nature of the material and changeable world, is likewise a worthy science. But mathematical physics, or any science in so far as it is mathematical, is in that precise degree unscientific, for it considers its subject under that aspect which is, in the first place, not of itself intelligible—matter—and in the second place not peculiar to it—the generic attributes, not the specific. The what and why of gravity is not really known by the assertion of a mathematical formula founded on the weight and distance of the bodies concerned: that merely relates gravity in one case to gravity in another case. It is a relative, not an absolute, science. But to men thus dominated by a concept of a natural measurable mechanical universe, the existence of millions of human beings regularly seeking their enrichment by hook or by crook offered the temptation to interpret economic phenomena on mathematical principles. They held that what was natural was universal, and therefore scientifically knowable. In addition, they deemed what was natural to be right, and the conclusions of their discoveries to be principles of action—the cause, philosophically, of most of the social evils of the twentieth century.

The early economists made all calculation by reference to "economic man"; that is, man's pursuit of gain, pleasure, and leisure was an absolute and not a relative assumption in their thought. Before analyzing this fallacy, it is but just to consider how very little part conscience and law played in the economic life of England and France at that epoch, and how universally the theory of "economic man" was realized in fact. Those whose consciences might otherwise have hindered them from doing as most men did felt justified in self-defence in practising the devices of the unscrupulous: no relic of principle from a previous era had vigour in society.

"Economic man" was, accordingly, the subject of the science in question. Now, it is necessary to make abstractions and to consider aspects in all sciences and for all knowledge. It is possible to separate in idea the physiological facts common to all men, or the psychological. Either body of truths is the material of a science. It is possible to consider in the abstract any quality inhering in innumerable particular things, and to examine its cause and its effects. There is no reason why the appetitive movement of the human animal to the control of material goods should not be abstracted from the other facets of human nature. This the economists did. They considered this appetite as the principle on which the economic life of a community reposed. But there was a fallacy in their process of argument. Let us see where they were in error.

Sources of wealth are land, labour, and capital: and acquired, it is received in prices, wages, rent, and interest. According to the economists, the causal nexus of the sources and the acquisition was either a maximist principle, like the law of rent, or an equilibrium of forces all economic, like the ambition of labourers to live and employers to pay as low wages as possible, which determined the "iron law of wages".

But an "economic law", such as the exchange value of some commodity, is in practice due to several causes, of which some are not found in "economic man": and an exception once made, the theory of his causal nature is invalid, and the hypothesis of his existence is useless.

The intervention of moral or legal principle, or mere indifference, is a factor which changes the nature of the whole subject under consideration. Indeed, the ultimate determining influence of all economic law *is* indifference to gain, for any fixity in price is due to the radical preference of men for a certain profit rather than a maximum profit, which could be achieved only by private bargaining in each particular case. The laws of economic activity are thus due to an equilibrium of economic appetite and non-economic. It would be as reasonable to assert that war is due to man as a fighting animal, and the laws of war to his not being entirely a fighting animal—quite reasonable, but hardly a matter of scientific analysis. But economic man is a necessary of a true science of economics. Yet he has been disposed of since 1870, and the science still flourishes. Two courses have been followed. The first is the acceptance of economic man as a true analysis of human nature, and the construction of a philosophic system to explain away every contradictory fact or hypothesis. This is the philosophy of Marxism and, radically, of Communism. Man is an acquisitive animal, says the Marxist materialist: all motives not professedly economic in human activity are ultimately so, and should be explicitly so—religion, culture, class distinction, are mere diseases in a society dominated by the appetite of the bourgeoisie for possession. Only matter is real: mind is an illusion. Hegelian dialectic explains away the principles of thought, and, consistent with its own inconsistency, this school of bastard philosophy wrought the Bolshevik Revolution firmly believing in the inevitability of the Communist State.

Modern economics, emancipated from the pseudo-science of the false abstraction "economic man", was created in the eighteen-seventies by Alfred Marshall and Stanley Jevons, following Cournot in France. The former looked upon economics as a co-ordination of quasi-physical phenomena arranged with a view to sociological and ethical ends. He used mathematical formulae to state and to interpret his data, as the only valid expression of a material by nature so indeterminate. Jevons brought his acute mind to bear on the relation of a scientific analysis to the understanding of an infinite diversity of singulars, and experimented in the use of calculus and other mathematical sciences to solve economic relations. Perhaps economics deserves a status among the sciences as a branch of mathematics, which is now its place among economists. Let us consider the case.

The problem is to construct a statement of universal validity on the results of the interplay of mutually interdependent causes, some of which are intrinsically incommensurate with others. That is to say, there is required a calculus in which all the terms are functions of one another. Thus, demand is the cause of supply. But supply causes part of the demand. Cost of production causes price, but anticipated price determines in part the cost of production, and itself depends in some degree on demand–and so forth. Variation, moreover, is never regular, although over an average a general formula may have validity, which it is the precise purpose of the mathematician to render intelligible. But the more universal the statement, and the more it possesses scientific validity, the less it represents economic facts. The more co-ordinated causes are introduced into the formula, the more it will represent a particular and not a universal statement. It is an attempt to reduce the concrete to the abstract: in practice, the concrete, though governed by normal regularity, is also the particular, and is never without differentiations which render universalization impossible. The economic laws of a national monopoly differ from those of a world monopoly, and that of a world monopoly in one commodity from that in another.

Moreover, mathematics is concerned only with what is, not with efficient or final causes, which are integral to a true interpretation of economic "laws". Hence, mathematical economics is incomplete save as a series of statistical formulations valid as far as they go.

Hence the conclusion stands that the modern development has created a science formally mathematical and materially economic: a symbolic expression of a complexus of increases and decreases in variable quantities. In other words, it is not a science at all, save in so far as it is not economic.

That economics is a branch of ethical science is urged by M. Vialatoux in his *Philosophie économique*, a notable contribution to that synthesis of the sciences of the modern era, which is the greatest intellectual need of the present generation. It is obvious that there is, at least potentially, a moral science of economics constituted by the body of principles which determine what is just in the production, consumption, and exchange of wealth. But the elaboration of such a science in the face of an economic order which has so far been scientifically considered only as a physical phenomenon, is beset with difficulties.

The first principle is one of St. Thomas Aquinas: that commercial operations are just if they are ordered to the common good, and unjust if they are not. But it is manifest that the first obligation of each man is to keep himself and his family. Not only does nature prompt him to this (as the classical economists rightly said), but justice to the community demands that he should do so, for otherwise his maintenance would be a burden on others. A second principle enters at this point: the increase of wealth is normally due to a desire for a higher status in society, which any man may legitimately seek, but not, clearly, to the detriment of society as a whole. Moreover a common agreement to help one another by helping oneself exists among all men, and is intensified by interest common to a group. Every profession is the germ of a conspiracy against the general public.

In consequence, moral principle in economic life is dependent on the relative claims on the individual of the necessities of livelihood, those of his status, the obligations he owes to his profession, those he owes to the community, and those due, in exceptional cases, to the particular person he is dealing with (as when a lawyer gives free advice to a poor man). No man can be expected to know, or to go out of his way to discover, the needs of another in his negotiations, nor normally to forego his own. In the less complex societies of the past, hereditary guilds, price-fixing, and sumptuary legislation curbed the avarice of the trader.

A vast development of the economic application of ethics is required to meet modern conditions—based on the same principles, and perhaps returning to the older practice, as in the Fascist State. But as a problem in casuistry, the intellectual process from abstract to concrete in the science of what ought to be is nearly as complex as the reverse process from concrete to abstract in the pseudo-science of what is.

A pseudo-science, but not in a merely pejorative sense. M. Vialatoux points out that it is not licit to constitute one science (Political Economy) out of the material of another (Ethics). It is undoubtedly true that when the actual order is divergent from the ideal, the former cannot be strictly scientific if the latter is, in the sense of essential to the nature of its subject-matter. But when one order of nature is neglected, another and lower order comes into operation, with laws of its own. As a cancer has a vegetative life of its own inferior in perfection to the life of a human body, so there is a body of principle governing the life of a community dominated by the concept of free competition and the absence of moral restraint in economic affairs.

Trade cycles recurred regularly in the nineteenth century: monopolies invariably result in high prices, profiteering and the rise of "piratical" industry on a small scale to undersell the monopolist, and so forth. Economic phenomena are as much subject to scientific systematization as the political phenomena of ancient Greece, which was the material of the first historical or pseudo-science, the *Politics* of Aristotle. An accurate corpus of generalizations is a useful branch of knowledge, and to question its precise claim to be called a science is pedantic in the face of universal custom (so long as the name is recognized to be analogical, in so far as true sciences are of necessary being and its causation).

The radical error in treating economics as an exact science lies in its nature. Its laws, or generalizations, are the result of an equilibrium of forces in different orders, some mutually opposed, all determined and all determining in different degrees. As the causes are not commensurate, so the results are accidental. In so far as the latter can be studied scientifically, they are, as we have seen, material for mathematics: in so far as the causes can be reduced to order, they are either problems for logicians or material for social psychologists. There is a point at which the human mind concentrated on the acquisition of a created good, reacts to extraneous causes with little or no intervention of will, and economic phenomena, considered as the product of an avaricious civilization, can serve as the ground of a department of experimental, and even animal, psychology. The tradition of the schoolmen can make good use of economics, but only as a maid-of-all-work. As a science, it has no real basis; nor is this surprising, for the parent philosophy of a mathematico-physical universe has melted away under the fire of Planck and Einstein, and has left European thought in need of a comprehensive synthesis which only a return to its most ancient tradition can supply.

A Poem Nearly Anonymous

II. *The Poet and His Formal Tradition*[*]

JOHN CROWE RANSOM

A FIRST-RATE poet performs in *Lycidas*, it is plain. And this is plain too: he performs because the decencies of an occasion require it of him, but the occasion catches him at a moment when his faith in the tradition of his art is none too strong, and in the performance rebellion is mixed up with loyalty. The study of the poem leads into a very broad field of discussion, and the topic is the general relation of the poet to his formal tradition.

By formal we are not to mean the metre only; but also, and it is probably even more important, the literary type, with its fictitious point of view from which the poet approaches his object, and its prescription of style and tone. And by tradition we should mean simply the source from which the form most easily comes. Tradition is the thing handed down by society, and the thing handed down is just a formula, a form.

Society hands down many forms which the individual is well advised to appropriate, but we are concerned here with those which may be called the aesthetic ones. They contrast themselves with the other and more common forms in the remarkable fact that they do not serve the principle of utility. This point has never been sufficiently remarked, so far as my reading indicates; not at all by, for example, so lucid a commentator of the manifold human spirit as George Santayana; so it is worth examining. There are economic forms; there are also aesthetic forms, which are not the same thing. Or, there are work-forms and there are play-forms.

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[*] **Part I appeared in the May issue.**

First, the economic forms. We inherit the traditional forms of such objects as plough, table, book, biscuit, machine, and of such processes as shepherding the flock, building, banking, making war. These forms are of intense practicality, and it is a good thing that they exist for the instruction of the successive generations, whose makeshifts, if they had to tutor themselves, would be blundering and ineffectual. Such forms write their own valuations, and very clearly. They are the recipes of maximum efficiency, short routes to "success", to welfare, to the attainment of natural satisfactions and comforts. They are the stock services which society confers upon its members, and the celebrated ones; doubtless in themselves alone a sufficient justification for constituted societies; sometimes, and especially where it is the "modern" temper which passes on it, the one usefulness which we can imagine as attaching to societies, and the whole purpose of the social contract. But that is, almost demonstrably, an error, proceeding from a blind spot on the organ of insight which we are scarcely in a position to detect. Men absorbed in "business" and affairs may be excused for making that error, but it would be an egregious one for those who spend of their time and love upon aesthetic effects. It is in the aesthetic effects, if secured in those experiences that record themselves publicly as "art", or for that matter as manners and religion, that the given forms are both more and less than they seem, and not, on the whole, of any conceivable economic advantage.

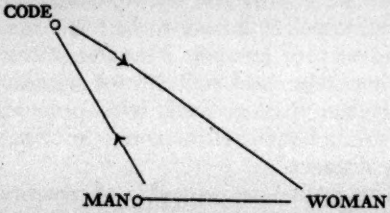
Chiefly the error is an eidolon of period, a matter of the age and generation. Societies of the old order seemed better aware of the extent of their responsibilities. Along with the work-forms went the play-forms, which were elaborate in detail, and vast in number, fastening upon so many of the common and otherwise practical occasions of our life and making them occasions of joy and reflection, even festivals and celebrations; yet at the same time by no means a help but if anything a hindrance to direct action. The aesthetic forms are a technique of restraint, not of efficiency. They do not butter our bread, and they delay the eating of it. They stand between the individual and his natural object and impose a check upon his action; the reason must have been known well to the high priests and governors of the old societies, for they honoured the forms with unanimity; it must even yet be recoverable, for the argument shapes itself readily. To the concept of direct action the old society—the directed and hierarchical one—opposed the concept of aesthetic experience, as a true opposite, and checked the one in order to induce the other. Perhaps, since a social psychology is something very subtle, they fancied that the indissolubility of societies might depend as much on the definition they gave to play as on the definition they gave to labour. If so, our modern societies, with their horror of "empty" forms and ceremonies, and their invitation to men to be themselves, and to handle their objects as quickly and rudely as they please, are not only destroying old arts and customs, which they might not mind doing, but exposing incidentally their own solidarity to the anarchy of too much individualism. But that is, as I say, an incident. The formal tradition in art has a validity more than political, and the latter I am content to waive. What I have in mind is an argument from aesthetics which will justify any formal art, even a formal literature.

II

When a consensus of taste lays down the ordinance that the artist shall express himself formally, the purpose is evidently—for at least this much is evident—to deter him from expressing himself immediately. Or, the formal tradition intends to preserve the artist from the direct approach to his object. Behind the tradition is probably the sense that the direct approach is perilous to the artist, and may be fatal. It is feared that the artist who disregards the instruction may discover at length that he has only been artless; or, what is worse, that he will not make this important discovery, which will have to be made for him by the horrid way of autopsy. I suggest, therefore, that an art is usually, and probably of necessity, a kind of obliquity; that its fixed form proposes to guarantee the round-about of the artistic process, and the "aesthetic distance".

A code of manners also is capable of being taken in this fashion; it confers the same benefit, or the same handicap if we prefer, upon its adherent. Let us represent graphically, as in the figure on the following page, the conduct of a man towards the woman he desires.

The event consists in his approach to the object. He may approach directly, and then his behaviour is to seize her as quickly as possible. No inhibitions are supposed to have kept the cave-man or the pirate, or any other of the now-admired figures of a great age when life was "in the raw", from taking this severely logical course. If our hero, however, does not propose for himself the character of savage, or of animal, but that of "gentleman", then he has the fixed code of his *gens* to remember, and then he is estopped from seizing her, he must approach her with ceremony, and pay her a fastidious courtship. We conclude not that the desire is abandoned, but that it will take a circuitous road and become a romance. The form actually denies to him the privilege of going the straight line between two points, even though this line has an axiomatic logic in its favour and is the shortest possible line. But the woman, contemplated in this manner under restraint, becomes a person and an aesthetic object; therefore a richer object.



In fact the woman becomes nothing less than an individual object; for we stumble here upon a fruitful paradox. The natural man, who today sometimes seems to be becoming always a greater man in our midst, asserting his rights so insistently, causing us to hear so much about "individualism", is a predatory creature to whom every object is an object of prey and the real or individual object cannot occur; while the social man, who submits to the restraint of convention, comes to respect the object and to see it unfold at last its individuality; which, if we must define it, is its capacity to furnish us with an infinite variety of innocent experience; that is, its character as a source, from which so many charming experiences have already flowed, and as a promise, a possibility of future experiences beyond all prediction. There must then, really, be two kinds of individualism: one is greedy and bogus, amounting only to egoism; the other is contemplative, genuine, and philosophical. The function of a code of manners is to make us capable of something better than the stupidity of an appetitive or economic life. High comedy, for example, is technically art, but substantially it is manners, and it has the agreeable function of displaying our familiar life relieved of its fundamental animality, filled, and dignified, through a technique which has in it nothing more esoteric than ceremonious intercourse.

To return to the figure, and to change the denotation slightly. Let us have a parallel now from the field of religion. The man is bereaved, and this time the object of his attention is the dead body of his friend. Instead of having a code of manners for this case, let him owe allegiance to a religious society, one which is possessed preferably of an ancient standing, and at all events of a ritual. The new terms for our graph become: Man and Corpse at the base, and Rite at the top and back. The religious society exists in order to serve the man in this crisis. Freed from his desolation by its virtue, he is not obliged now to run and throw himself upon the body in an ecstasy of grief, nor to go apart and brood upon the riddle of mortality, which may be the way of madness. His action is through the form of a pageant of grief, which is lovingly staged and attended by the religious community. His own grief expands, is lightened, no longer has to be explosive or obsessive. A sort of by-product of this formal occasion, we need not deny, is his grateful sense that his community supports him in a dreadful hour. But what interests us rather is the fact that his preoccupation with the deadness of the body is broken up by his participation in the pageantry, and his bleak situation elaborated with such rich detail that it becomes massive, substantial, and sufficient.

We may of course eliminate the pageantry of death from our public life, but only if we expect the widow and orphan not really to feel their loss; and to this end we may inform them that they will not find it an economic loss, since they shall be maintained in their usual standards of living by the State. It is unfortunate for the economic calculus that they are likely to feel it anyway, since probably their relation to the one dead was not more economic than it was sentimental. Sentiments, those irrational psychic formations, do not consist very well with the indifference, machine-like, with which some modern sociologists would have men fitting into the perfect economic organization. It is not as good animals that we are complicated with sentimental weakness. The hungry infant does not care what mother feeds it, the healthy sailor arrived in port may demand a woman without demanding any one in particular, and animals, on the whole, are like true scientists and manufacturers in that their fierce drives are only towards a *kind* of thing, the indifferent instance of a universal, and not some private and irreplaceable thing. All the nouns at this stage are common nouns. But we, for our curse or our pride, have sentiments; they are directed towards persons and things; and a sentiment is the totality of love and knowledge which we have of an object that is private and unique. This object might have been a simple economic object, yet we have elected to graft upon the economic relation a vast increment of diffuse and irrelevant sensibilia, and to keep it there forever, obstructing science and action. Sometimes we practise "sublimation", and attach the major weight of our being, unreasonably, and to the point of absurdity, to a precious object. The adventitious interest, the sensibility that complicates and sometimes submerges the economic interest, does not seem to ask any odds of it, nor to think it necessary to theorize on behalf of its own existence. We may resent it, but eventually we have to accept it, as, simply, an "aesthetic" requirement, a piece of foolishness, which human nature will not forego. Wise societies legalize it and make much of it; for its sake they define the forms of manners, religions, arts; conferring a public right upon the sensibilia, especially when they organize themselves, or pile up notably, as they do, into the great fixed sentiments.

In Russia we gather that there is a society bent seriously on "perfecting" the human constitution, that is, rationalizing or economizing it completely. The code of manners and the religious ritual are suspended, while the arts lead a half-privileged, censored, and furtive existence. Already a recent observer notes one result of the disappearance of the sex taboos: there is less sex-consciousness in Russia than anywhere in the Western world. That is to say, I suppose, that the loyal Russians approach the perfect state of animals, with sex reduced to its pure biological business. The above observer wonders painfully whether "love", of the sort that has been celebrated by so much history and so much literature, will vanish from Russia. It will vanish, if this society succeeds in assessing it by the standard of economic efficiency. The Russian leaders are repeating, at this late stage of history, with a people whose spirit is scored by all the traditional complications of human nature, the experiment of the Garden of Eden; when the original experiment should be conclusive, and was recorded, we may imagine, with that purpose in view. The original human family was instructed not to take the life of the beast-couples as its model; and did not, exactly, mean to do so; occupied itself with a certain pretty project having to do with a Tree of Rationalization; and made the mortal discovery that it came to the very same thing. The question is whether the ideal of efficient animality is good enough for human beings; and whether the economic law, by taking precedence at every point over the imperative of manners, of religion, and of the arts, will not lead to perfect misery.

III

And now, specifically, as to art, and its form. The analogy of the above occasions to the occasion called art is strict. Our terms now are Artist, Object, and Form. Confronting his object, the artist is tempted to react at once by registering just that aspect of the object in which he is practically "interested". For he is originally, and at any moment may revert to, a natural man, having a predatory and acquisitive interest in the object, or at best looking at it with a "scientific" curiosity to see if he cannot discover one somewhere in it. Art has a canon to restrain this natural man. It puts the object out of his reach; or, more accurately, removes him to where he cannot hurt the object, nor disrespect it by taking his practical attitude towards it; exchanging his actual station, where he is too determined by proximity to the object, and contemporaneity with it, for the more ideal station furnished by the literary form. For example: there is the position, seemingly the silly and ineffectual position, of the man who is required by some quixotic rule of art to think of his object in pentameter couplets, therefore with a good deal of lost motion; and there is the far-fetched "point of view", which will require him to adapt all his thought to the rule of drama. The motion is well lost, if that is what it costs to frustrate the natural man and induce the aesthetic one. Society may not after all be too wildly mistaken in asking the artist to deal with his object somewhat artificially. There will be plenty of others glad to deal with it immediately. It is perfectly true that art, *a priori*, looks dubious; a project in which the artist has a splendid chance of being a fool for his pains. The bad artists in the world are cruelly judged, they are the good journeymen gone wrong; and the good artists may be humorously regarded, as persons strangely possessed. But the intention of art is one that it is peculiarly hard to pursue steadily, because it goes against the grain of our dominant and carefully instructed instincts; it wants us to enjoy life, to taste and reflect as we drink; when we are always tending as abstract appetites to gulp it down; or as abstract intelligences to proceed, by a milder analogue, to the cold fury of "disinterested" science. A technique of art must, then, he unprepossessing, and look vain and affected, and in fact look just like the technique of fine manners, or of ritual. Heroic intentions call for heroic measures.

We should not be taken in for a moment when we hear critics talking as if the form were in no sense a discipline but a direct help to the "expressiveness"—meaning the forthrightness—of the poem. This view reflects upon the holders a pretty credit for a reach of piety which is prepared to claim everything for the true works of art, and also a suspicion of ingenuousness for their peculiar understanding of the art-process. Given an object, and a poet burning to utter himself upon it, he must take into account a third item, the form into which he must cast his utterance. (If we like, we may call it the *body* which he must give to his passion.) It delays and hinders him, and perhaps frets him. In the process of "composition" the burning passion is submitted to cool and scarcely relevant considerations. When it appears finally it may be said to have been treated with an application of sensibility. The thing expressed there is not the hundred-percent passion at all.

If the passion burns too hot in the poet to endure the damping of the form, he might be advised that poetry can exercise no undue compulsion upon his spirit since, after all, there is prose. Milton may not always have let the form have its full effect upon the passion; some modern poets whom I admire do not; neither of which facts, however, disposes one to conclude that poety is the worse for the formal tradition. The formal tradition, as I have said, lays upon the poet evidently a double requirement. One is metrical or mechanical; but the measured speech is part of the logical identity of the poem; it goes into that "character" which it possesses as an ideal creation, out of the order of the actual. (If any poets think they find that a metre, which certainly inhibits the expression of the economic man, inhibits also the expression of the ideal or aesthetic man, I should conclude they have much to learn about this technique and its resources.) The other requirement is the basic one of the make-believe, the drama, the specific anonymity or pseudonymity, which defines the poem as poem; when that goes we may almost say that the poem goes; so that there would seem to be taking place in the name of poetry a rather unprofitable labour if this anonymity is not clearly conceived when a poet is starting upon his poem, and a labour lost if the poet, who has once conceived it and established it, forgets to maintain it.

IV

We accept or refuse the arts, with their complex intention, according as we like or dislike the fruits, or it may be the flowers, they bring to us; but these arts, and their techniques, may be always reinforced by the example of manners, and the example of religion; the three institutions do not rest on three foundations but on one foundation. A natural affiliation binds together the gentleman, the religious man, and the artist—punctilious characters, all of them, in their formalism. We have seen one distinguished figure in our times pronouncing on behalf of all three in one breath. In politics, royalist; in religion, Anglo-Catholic; in literature, classical. I am astonished upon discovering how comprehensively this formula covers the kingdom of the aesthetic life as it is organized by the social tradition. I am so grateful that it is with hesitation I pick a little quarrel with the terms. I would covet a program going something like this: In manners, artistocratic; in religion, ritualistic; in art, traditional. But I imagine the intent of Mr. Eliot's formula is about what I am representing; and on the other hand might be only the more effective to fight with for being so concrete. The word for our generation in these matters is "formal", and it might even bear the pointed qualification, "and reactionary". The phrase would carry the sense of our need to make a return to amenities which the European communities laboured to evolve, and defined perhaps as "civilization". For the intention of none of those societies can have been simply to confirm the natural man as a natural man, or even simply to improve him in cunning and effectiveness by furnishing him with its tried economic forms. It wanted to humanize him; which means, so far as his natural economy permitted, to complicate his natural functions with sensibility, and make them aesthetic. The object of a proper society is to instruct its members how to transform instinctive experience into aesthetic experience.

Manners, rites, and arts are so close to each other that often their occasions must be confused, and it does not matter much if they are. The rule of manners is directed to those occasions when the native appetites and urges are concerned; when we hunger, or lust, or go into a rage, or encounter strange and possibly dangerous persons. The rites take place upon religious occasions; but I suppose this is tautology. Religion is an institution existing for the sake of its ritual, rather than, as I have heard, for the sake of its doctrines, to which there attaches no cogency of magic, and for that matter a very precarious cogency of logic. The issues upon which the doctrines pronounce are really insoluble for human logic, and the higher religionists are aware of it. The only solution that is possible, since the economic solution is not possible, is the aesthetic one. When these issues press upon us, there is little that one man, with whatever benefit of doctrines, can do towards the understanding of the event which another man cannot do; and he had better not try too hard to understand the precise event, but enlarge its terms, and assimilate it into the form of an ornate public ritual through which the whole mind can discharge itself. This is a subtle technique, it has been a very successful technique; in insisting upon it as the one thing I do not mean to subtract dignity from the world's great religions—which I revere. What then are the specific occasions for ritual? Those which are startling in our biological and economic history, and provoke reflection; and then, for fear we may forget to be startled when we are living for a long interval upon a dead level of routine, some arbitrary occasions, frequent and intercalated; therefore birth, marriage, death; war, peace, the undertaking of great enterprises, famine, storm; the seasons of the year, the Sabbath, the holidays. But as for the artistic process, what are its occasions? What prompts the artist? For we remark at once that many works of art embody ritual, and art is often apparently content to be the handmaiden to religion, as Hegel desired that she should be, and as she conceivably is in a painting by Michelangelo, or a poem on the order of *Lycidas*. We know also that works of art have been dedicated to the ceremonious life of society, commemorating chivalry, or some much easier code; art serving manners.

The occasions of art are innumerable; very probably its "future is immense". Its field is wider than that of manners, wider than that of religion; the field of literary art alone is that. In fact it is about as wide as the field of science itself; and there I think lies the hint for a definition. What is the occasion which will do for the artist and the scientist indifferently? It is the occasion when we propose to "study" our object; that is, when we are more than usually undesirous and free, and find the time to become curious about the object as, actually, something "objective" and independent. Out of the surplus of our energy—thanks to the efficiency of our modern economic forms we have an increasing surplus of energy—we contemplate object as object, and are not forced by an instinctive necessity to take it and devour it immediately. Now this contemplation may take one of two routes; and first, that of science. I study the object to see how I may wring out of it my physical satisfaction the next time; or even how I may discover for the sake of a next time the physical satisfaction which it contains, but not too transparently; analysing and classifying, "experimenting," bringing it under the system of control which I intend as a scientist to have over the world of objects. It is superfluous to observe that I, the modern scientist, am in this case spiritually as poverty-stricken as was my true ancestor the cave-man, according to such reports as we have. My intention is simply to have bigger and quicker satisfactions than he had, my head still runs on satisfactions. But I may contemplate also under another form entirely, the form of art. And that is when I am impelled neither to lay hands on the object immediately, nor to ticket it for tomorrow's outrage, but am in such a marvelous state of innocence that I would know it for its own sake, and conceive it as having its own existence; this is the knowledge, or it ought to be, which Schopenhauer praised as "knowledge without desire". The features which the object discloses then are not those which have their meaning for a science, for a set of practical values. They are those which render the fulness of the object, and constitute a body of knowledge so radical that the scientist as a scientist can scarcely understand it, and puzzles to see it rendered, richly, and wastefully, in the poem, or the painting. The knowledge attained there, and recorded, is a new kind of knowledge, the world in which it is set is a new world.

A new world, and it requires a new metaphysic, a new philosophy, to declare it—provided that a world does not seem quite to belong to us until the philosopher gives us a card of admission. It is a world of individuals. The old philosophies have generally tried to have us conceive only of a world of laws, in which the individuals are translated into instances, objects of appetite, human services. But the individual objects, if we find it possible to take them from their own point of view, are not exactly the consequences of the laws, nor of our necessities; they are prior; and posterior too, since the laws do not manage necessarily to splinter them into nothing. The philosophy of this new world will not hope, nor will it desire, to betray nature into the dominion of man.

And not only a new philosophy, but a new psychology—to explain that there is in us, upon occasions either homely or rare, something "beyond the pleasure principle", something unlibidinous, a capacity for diffusion which outruns strict economy, a willingness to ignore our "manifest destiny" as biological specimens, which is not going to prove fatal; in brief, a general sensibility, more innocent than other faculties, wanting exercise. Otherwise why should we fall in love so uselessly and defiantly with our objects? And then put them into art and fall in love with them again? The impulse is not an animal one; nevertheless I will commit the pathetic fallacy for the sake of a little analogy from the animal world. Orthodox psychologists seem to regard the human being rather as a large and surly cat. If he is full, he dozes, or he hunts, he does not care to play, and he has no affections. It would be truer if psychology would sometimes liken man to a very sensitive puppy, who understands that he is a puppy, and spends his spare time in romping, or else in lying and wagging his tail and pondering closely the mysterious countenance of his master.

V

Apology is in order, but we may as well for a moment bring the puppy to John Milton; he is much more puppy than cat. And, as puppy, it is interesting to remark that we shall never be able to catch him on the pure plane of romping, that is, dashing through the fields to smell the violets and pursue the butterflies, in the promiscuous manner of some young ladies having their poetic exercise, and of some painters pleased with any pretty object which they may wander upon; he is only to be discovered meditating an object which is formidable, with a scrutiny which is steady, like that of a scientist, but infinitely more sensitive. Milton was a strong man and had powerful economic persuasions, if we may bring under that term his personal, moral, and political principles. These are his precious objects; or the situations in which he finds them are. But the situations in his poetry are not his actual situations, they are fancied ones which do not touch him quite so nearly, distant enough to inhibit the economic impulse, which would have inhibited the sensibility. The result is that Milton's poetry, broadly speaking, may be said always to deal with "important" or highly economic subjects. The importance of the subject is not the importance of the poetry; that depends more on the sensitiveness and completeness of the experience. The subject will generally be found to have been treated more precisely or practically somewhere in his economic prose; that is, in the ethical, theological, political tracts. It pleases us to imagine, on the strength of Milton's example, that there is no prose which is incapable of becoming a poetry, no subject in his mind so urgent that he is intimidated by it, and cannot feel it, enjoy it, and spread it out; live it, in the way we might call upon some superior man to live it.

So let us look finally and briefly, but as definitively as we may, at the whole net accomplishment of John Milton; starting from a convenient point, which will be *Lycidas*. This poem looks backward upon a long period of minor or practice poetry, and forward to the career of the major poet; while, as I pointed out in my previous essay, it does not fail to betray the man behind the poet.

We do not find in *Lycidas* quite the proper occasion for a modern tract on communism, nor even for a contemporaneous tract on divorce; which makes it useless either to mourn or to rejoice that Milton has not attempted a demonstration that literature is sociology, or literature is science. We do find in the death of the young clergyman the occasion for a contemporaneous tract on the degeneration of the clergy; and Milton, with some difficulty, perhaps, dismisses that temptation. For his dalliance, if we seem to detect it, he is probably the less an artist. Yet Milton entertained strict views upon the function of the artist, and only upon strong compulsion was apostate.

Milton felt the impact of modernity which is perennial in every generation; or, if it is not, of the rather handsome degree of modernity which was current in his day. He was exposed to specific temptation because he was a man of his times and held strong views upon the contemporary ecclesiastical and political situations, in a period when the church and the political order were undergoing revolution; he was of the party of revolution. He had a natural inclination to preach, and display his zeal; to preach upon such themes as the reform of the clergy, and the reform of the government. And he tended to preach intemperately when he preached; that is, blindly and rudely. He knew of this tendency in himself and opposed it. He went so far as to abandon that career in the church which his father had intended for him and to which he seems at the first to have consented. The career which he chose instead was one which we are wrong if we consider vague and indefinite, for he hardly considered it so—the career of an artist. He has a good deal to say about this choice. If in the course of a public controversy much later he argued that he had given up the church because he could not endure its tyrannical overlords, he made no such plea in the affectionate Latin letter written to his father when the issue was hot. Here he is content simply to assert the superiority of the poet to other men. He is impressed with the elevation of the poet's mind, which makes up a sort of aristocracy, an attitude habitually aesthetic; and he has studied it, and had it, enough to know. (We must not suppose, as Milton did not, that a man has to be born in some statistical manner to this elevation. He may bring himself up to it.)

This is not quite the same as saying that Milton renounced his position as a man in order to take a position as a poet; he expected to occupy both positions, but at different times. But he did not consent to define himself as the man; that is, as the man with a profession, the economic man. As a man he was too much like many of us: if not too appetitive in the flesh, at least too zealous in intellectual action, which comes, aesthetically, to the same thing. He might have elected to become, not an artist, but a man of science; a character that is just barely not a man of action, or a professional. Science belongs to the economic impulse and does not free our spirits; its celebrated virtue is due to its position on the economic scale, well distanced from the maw and the mouth of actual red appetite, while its technique is precisely the same.

Like many other people, he had a blind spot. He could scarcely receive from ritual the aesthetic benefit which was intended for him in that dispensation. Ritual turned him suspicious and truculent; a great modernism. Yet the inhibition lay upon the act of public participation, not so much upon his intuitive understanding of the matter, and we may easily overstate it. It is probably a common variety of Protestantism. When he came under the milder influences of poetry, he composed the kind of effects which he valued, which he constantly received in the traditional poetry of Greeks, Romans, Italians, and Englishmen—poetry nearly as ornate, mythological, religious, as a ritual itself could be. But when he was faced by the ritual, the effective thing itself, administered by priests whom he had determined to hold as hypocritical, he was roused invariably to resistance. So inveterate and passionate did this resistance become that it took him into the extremest Protestant camp to write hard doctrine, and actually to set up his own religion as a project in dialectic. All the time he "knew" better; probably no European poet exceeds him much, either for consistency or for depth of insight, in mythological sense. The same Milton appealed in a Latin exercise to Plato not to banish the myth-makers from the Republic, and some years later would have liked publicly to chase out of England the Anglican ritualists, the adherents of the then myth, as idolators. That is the Milton paradox.

He was obstinate in his idea of what the church must have been for him as a calling. His Anglo-Roman contemporaries could have told him—probably they told him—that the priest who is charged with the performance of the ritual, and on some occasions with creating ritual on his own responsibility, is eminently in the service of the cult of aesthetic experience. His noble Italian friends certainly told him, during that triumphal tour on which he received honours incredible for a professing Puritan in Rome, except that he may have been regarded as a man not yet too openly committed, and still reclaimable. Among these friends was the great Manso, to whom it must have seemed a pity that a poet so prodigious, and so responsive to the ancient traditions of his calling, was capable of not perceiving that these had anything to do with the majestic ceremonial of a Roman church; of any church. We may imagine that Manso had this anomaly in mind—and not merely the havoc which the young collegiate Milton had wrought with the Catholics, or tried to wreak, in his exuberant exercise on the Gunpowder Plot—when he presented Milton with a fine Latin compliment, to which there was attached all the same an impressive qualification: "If your piety were such as your mind, your form, charm, face, and manners, then you would not be an Angle, but in sober truth an Angel." Manso owed this pun, of course, to the sixth-century Gregory, who had made it upon observing the fair-haired Anglian slaves in Rome, and thinking how beautifully they might one day take their own part in the noble ritual of a world-wide catholic church. Gregory's hope had been realized rather quickly, but now in Milton's time it seemed on the point of being deceived; and here was one of the race in question, brilliantly endowed in his mind and person, but stubborn in his barbarism; for Manso could not fail to appreciate just what it meant for a society to cast off its grand religious forms.

But, as I have said, Milton did know better than he acted; he made his choice and became the artist; and exercised his *métier* with an aristocratic taste that almost never failed him; though he was no more able as layman than he had been as prospective priest to apply this taste to the forms of his worship. We do not regret his decision when we have to follow him during the ten or fifteen years after 1640, the period in which he felt obliged as a citizen to drop the poet and become the preacher, the tractarian, and the economic man, altogether, and after all. During that period we remember gratefully that he shares our own view of his intractable nature, in which so much of the sin of Adam resides; that he understands his predicament. The formality of poetry sustained him, induced in him his highest nobility, and his most delicate feeling. The ding-dong of contemporary controversy brought out of him something ugly and plebeian that was there all the time, waiting. He took care that the preacher should be the Miltonic rôle for but a period; the artist came back, and was perhaps the better artist for the ignominy which he had suffered; though I shall not try to argue that.

Art was his deliberate career. It is a career, precisely as science is a career. It is as serious, it has an attitude as official, it is as studied and consecutive, it is by all means as difficult, it is no less important. It may be less remunerative, it is further from offering the sort of values which are rewarded at the marketplace; today it may be so unrewarded that, if we agree to regard it like science as a career, we are not inclined to regard it like science as a profession; but so far from being at a disadvantage on that account, it may be the better off, as having a clearer innocence because of it, and finding innocence a very proper virtue for its peculiar processes.

It would follow of course that Milton has been widely if not generally misunderstood by those who define him primarily as a Puritan moralist, or a theologian, or a political thinker, or an early modern, or a scholar. Some ultra-modern critics, as was inevitable, have now turned a highly-regarded sort of illumination upon him "as a man", and in that capacity as one of the damned, having an inherited disease, or a libido, or a crack in his mind—which seems at this distance unimportant if true. He was chiefly and preferably, and on a life-long scale, an artist. Those who will not undertake to gather what this involved for him will be finding themselves constantly rebuffed by the mountains of irrelevance raised against them in the body of his poetry. Milton is the poetry, and is lost to them if they do not know how to make acquaintance there. What on earth will they do with those cool flora that bloom so uselessly in the formal if somewhat tangled garden which is *Lycidas*?

The Restoration of Property

IV. *Attacking the Large Unit*

HILAIRE BELLOC

I SAID at the end of my last article that, after the comparatively straightforward task of restoring *in some degree* (but as much as possible) the small distributor, and in a necessarily lesser degree (but as much as possible) the craftsman, we should have to deal with the more serious task of the distribution of ownership in those great units of production, distribution, transport, et cetera, which cannot of their nature be worked "severally" as can the forge, the carpenter's shop, and the grocery. These large units cover most of the field in the highly industrialized countries such as England, but they cover a large part of it in nearly all modern nations, and an appreciable part even in those which can in general be called agricultural.

In the past, and during the present moment, this field of the large unit has tended to become larger. The economic area in which you cannot hope to recreate the small distributor and the small craftsman has tended to increase at the expense of the area in which you can restore him.

This tendency is due to two quite different causes, between which it is most important to distinguish, especially as most of those who deal with these matters in our modern economic writing confuse them badly. There are, first of all:

(*a*) The economic unit which has, *from the nature of the instrument used,* to be worked on a large scale; the classical example is a railway system.

(*b*) The economic unit which becomes a large one, not from the nature of things, not because the instruments used must be gathered together in one centre or under one combination and control, but because the elimination of competitive costs, and even the greater perfection of methods accompanying amalgamation (coupled, of course, with the greed of those who manage the amalgamation) tend to produce such great units. Here the force at work is a human and not a mechanical one, and has nothing to do with the nature of the instruments concerned—or little to do with it—and much more to do with the effects of untrammelled competition.

We have seen how true this is of the chain shop and the big store, and the same thing is at work, of course, in production and in transport. You see it in the eating up of the small motor-bus services by new big combines, which should logically grow into one great combine; you see it in the production of such things as phonograph records in great centralized factories, and in many such factories under one control, and, of course, in thousands of other instances.

I say it is all-important to distinguish between the two kinds of tendency: they are to be dealt with in quite different fashions. The defenders of industrial capitalism—such few of them as are left—and those with the same type of mind who defend Socialism, and its only logical form, Communism, have told us over and over again that amalgamation is inevitable. They call it an "economic necessity" because they think that anything that is cheaper or more efficient for the special purpose of production or transport must necessarily oust that which is somewhat less cheap or somewhat less efficient. They also imply that there is a necessity for the greedier man and the more cunning man to eat up the more generous and the less instructed. They confuse what they here call "necessity" with that true necessity imposed by the instrument and by universal natural laws independent of the human will. There is no *necessity* for amalgamation into larger and larger units, where the instruments used do not of themselves impose larger and larger units. The only "necessity" here is the logical necessity of consequences following upon certain human arrangements. Where you have arranged the rules of the game in any particular fashion there will necessarily follow certain consequences, but those consequences no longer follow when you change the rules of the game.

If you were to declare immunity for those who stole watches there would follow as a necessity a great deal of watch-stealing as compared with the stealing of other objects. If there were no punishment for assault you would find weaker men bullied on a large scale physically by stronger men; and in the same way if there is no restriction of competition or of the scale of ownership or of the size of amalgamation and control thereof, then, indeed, there is a sort of necessity making for the increase of the economic unit. But this is only true so long as the rules stand thus—change the rules and the necessity disappears.

Where, however, the instrument used is of such a nature that it can only be used on a large scale then there is indeed a necessity for a large economic unit. I have quoted the railway as the classical example of this. To build a railway from Bilbao to Leon will cost a very large sum indeed; you will have to prepare the gradients, to build bridges, make cuttings, pierce tunnels through the mountains, and when you have done all that you must have your rolling stock and the rest—you cannot operate the thing save as one very large unit. But there is no *necessity* that all motor-buses going along an already existing road from Bilbao to Leon should be owned by one big combine, or one rich person, or even all controlled from one centre. They will tend to be so controlled if you leave competition unchecked; that is if your society and your laws are so organized that property is safe-guarded by the laws while its good distribution is not so safe-guarded.

Now our policy in dealing with these two quite distinct groups of large units should, I think, be four-fold:

I. In the matter of units which are necessarily large, because the large instrument alone is capable of doing the work, we must watch every opportunity of substituting the smaller unit for the larger whenever a new discovery permits this; but where there is no such opportunity, where the large unit is inevitable, we must have control either for the purpose of creating well distributed property in the shares thereof, or for the purpose of managing the use of it as a communal concern. For instance, much of the centralized mechanical production of our time could be decentralized through the now widely distributed use of electrical power. A differential tax would effect this.

II. Where amalgamation and the formation of large units is due not to the nature of the instrument but to unchecked competition, we must deliberately reverse the process, as in the case of the shopkeeper and craftsman. We must penalize amalgamation and support division of units. For instance, the grinding of wheat into flour has become the monopoly of a few large mills which took advantage of the War. It would be immediately possible to penalize these by differential taxation and restore the smaller millers by the subsidy thus available.

III. In all cases where separately owned shares in the unit are possible (and they are nearly always possible) we should aim at creating the largest possible number of shareholders and at preventing the growth of large blocks of shares under one control.

IV. We should especially act against that typical modern evil which may be called "irresponsible control", whereby the economic unit is managed without real responsibility to the shareholders, and even without the real possession of the shares by those who control them.

Let us take these four points one by one.

I. The process of discovery and application is not, as was arbitrarily affirmed in the nineteenth century and even later, one necessarily making for the large unit. New discoveries and new applications do not produce in any inevitable way the expensive instrument as against the inexpensive. The idea that they did so was, like most so-called "scientific" ideas, an irrational conclusion drawn from blind habitual experience which did not consider the logical nature of the problem.

It was the experience of those who began the use of modern machinery that the machines to their hand were increasingly expensive and could be used very much better—often could only be used—in large centralized fashion. The system was already well started and had gathered momentum when new instruments appeared eminently favourable for a smaller division of the unit, and the opportunity was not fully taken advantage of precisely because of that momentum gained by the earlier system of large units. First we had the electric motor, whereby power could be almost infinitely divided; next we had the internal combustion engine whereby it could be still further divided, especially for the purposes of transport. Of this somewhat more advantage was taken than of electricity, but in both cases the advantage was rapidly neutralized by amalgamations which had nothing to do with the nature of the instrument but were merely the result of uncontrolled competition—the rich man swallowing up the poor man.

What the future may reserve for us in the way of new instruments we cannot tell, but at any rate with those already in hand there is an indefinitely large field for the expansion of well divided effort and its accompanying well divided ownership. In those cases where the instrument is necessarily very expensive we may, as I have said, adopt one of two methods: we may either promote the ownership of it into shares, the proper division of which and the saving of which from irresponsible control we will later discuss; or we may accept the principle of communal ownership, whether by a guild or by the State, but under the general proviso that ownership by the State is better avoided where possible. We must admit that there are cases where it will be found in practice to work to the advantage of all, save that such ownership tends to make a proletariat of those who serve it. State ownership is better, of course, than ownership by very rich individuals, or even than ownership by many small shareholders who are at the mercy of a few rich ones; but there is always the danger in State ownership that the men who work for the State-owned instrument will turn, if they are not turned already, into wage-slaves, without other support than the weekly provision made for them by their master the State. This is not strictly and necessarily the result, but it tends to be the result. The Belgian and German railway systems, for instance, the one when it was State-owned and the other still being State-owned, worked, and work very well for the community and remained curiously free from the corruption which so-called "representative institutions" breed in such affairs. The Parliamentarians of the two States in question left, I understand, a clean-working and efficient bureaucracy to do the management, though no doubt they occasionally put themselves and their hangers-on into particular jobs connected with the monopoly. We must not start with the principle that State-ownership is always bad through its tendency both to inefficiency and corruption; but we *must* start with the proviso that it must be avoided where possible, although State control for the purpose of preventing irresponsible monopoly is essential.

A chartered guild composed of the workers in the system would be one form of communal system securing a better distribution of wealth; so would a chartered shareholding company, to which the rules we are about to consider (applicable to all shareholding and designed with the object of a good division of property in the shares) should apply.

But in all this department we must remember that the necessarily large unit covers a far smaller field than is generally imagined. There is the railway; there is the post office; there is the telephone and the telegraph; there is the road system of the country. But the great mass of production, distribution, and transport does not fall under this category. That great mass is concerned with the second point.

And meanwhile every new discovery or application of an existing discovery which makes for the break-up of such monopoly must be fostered. For instance, it is directly against our policy to bolster up the railway against road transport. It is, on the contrary, part of our policy to favour the new road transport against the railway, because road transport can be worked in small units and the railway cannot.

But it is essential that our support of rural transport should be a support of the small man and that we should differentiate strongly against the use of the road by the great monopolies, especially those which deal in heavy goods. Railway property has at least by the action of time become better distributed than most of the great capitalist groups, whereas some of the monopolies which are now getting the advantage of road transport at the public charge are virtually in the hands of half a dozen men and in England are often—as in the case of petrols and oils—the property of aliens.

II. As to those amalgamations into large units which are the result of competition and human arrangements independent of the nature of the instrument used, we can act there exactly as it was proposed to act in the matter of the chain shop. We can penalize the large unit, and subsidize and advantage in every way the smaller unit.

This does not mean, of course, that we can break up units which of their nature must be of a certain size. One type of production will need an organization such that you cannot have less than a certain size of unit connected with it, another will require a still larger size, and in every such case you will, for the better distribution of property, have to organize for property in the form of share-holding. But what is essential is to prevent the amalgamation of units beyond the maximum size required for actual production in that particular department.

For instance, you may say: "We cannot make incandescent lamps in the modern fashion without such and such a minimum amount of capital. It is necessary for the making of the lamps that such considerable units should exist." Yes, but it is not necessary that many factories should be amalgamated into one. Production and distribution may be rendered somewhat cheaper by so doing, the work may even be somewhat more efficiently done, but the price you have to pay in the loss of freedom is a great deal too high.

Another striking example is breweries. Today they tend to be few and centralized. Better beer and a greater choice would result from penalizing the large brewery and with the revenue subsidizing the small one, down to the household brewer.

In the mixed cases you must advantage the smaller unit as against the greater. An excellent example is the modern production of shoes. Shoes can be produced by machinery on a larger scale and much more cheaply than they can be by the hand-craftsman. Such shoes are also much worse than those produced by the hand-craftsman. But you cannot, with modern urban populations, abandon the mechanical production of shoes. What could be done would be to encourage the hand-craftsman so that his necessarily small number should at any rate be extended as much as possible. You should tax the mechanical production, and, above all, you should see to it that there should be no amalgamation of factories or establishment of very large factories, when, at no very considerable loss of efficiency, the smaller factory will do. In other words, you must here as everywhere reverse the direction of economic life; you must do the opposite of what was done by those who began the industrialization of the modern world—you must act in a fashion which *they* would have called artificial or unnatural, and against what *they* called the "economic tendency". That spirit indeed must run through all the effort for the restoration of property if there is to be any chance of its even partial success.

III. The setting up of smaller units held in shares and controlled by guild or company monopolies where these are necessary will be of no service to those who desire to restore property unless the shares are well distributed. To effect a good distribution therein you must apply differential taxation, in three ways:

First, to the size of the individual shareholding group. You must make it difficult for the large group to buy up the smaller one. You must make it easy for the smaller group to start at the expense of the larger one, and then to grow to a certain size in spite of the efforts the larger one will make to crush it out.

Secondly, you must limit the individual holding of shares; not by arbitrary legislation (merely saying that not more than so many shares may be held in one hand), but, again, by differential taxation. Where the holder of so many shares desires to increase his holding he must pay a tax which rises so steeply that as his accumulation proceeds it is soon checked, and the proceeds of that tax can be put to the subsidizing of purchase by the smaller holders. That is a new principle to which we are quite unaccustomed, but without it the restoration of property will not work.

Thirdly, there must be a capital tax on industrial shares (as distinguished from land, which is in a different category altogether). More must be provided by such a capital tax and less by income tax. Thus only do you really differentiate against the big holder.

It may be argued that we have something of the kind already in the inheritance tax, to which I answer that the parallel is false. The inheritance tax does not prevent accumulation nor redistribute it after it is made; all it does is to take away a certain part of private accumulation and dissipate it in keeping alive various State functionaries and paying usury on nonproductive State debts. But a capital tax on the value of shares held, and levied continuously on the amount of shares held would automatically produce the desired result.

When you have these three forces at work in combination a wide distribution of ownership of shares will necessarily follow.

IV. There remains provision against that worst of modern evils in matters of shareholding–irresponsible control. As things are today you get the following state of affairs:

Some swindler (to give him his true name) having 51 per cent of the shares in a company (we will call it A) puts forward company A as the purchaser of 51 per cent of the shares in company B. In other words, he uses the property of the other 49 per cent of the shareholders of company A, without responsibility to them, and makes company A the controller of company B. He then uses his control of company B to purchase 51 per cent of the shares of company C–and so on. At last one individual (or small group) has in his hands the control of an indefinitely large number, to whom he is not responsible.

The actual process, of course, is infinitely more complicated than that and is capable of any amount of modification, but that is the principle at work.

In order to defeat it there must be an established principle that:

(*a*) There shall be no majority control save through a very large majority, certainly more than 51 per cent and better 80 per cent.

(*b*) No affiliation of companies, nor power of purchase of shares by a company as a person.

Now we remark that irresponsible control is also called "inevitable" through the breakdown of an unwieldy machinery of voting. A general meeting of shareholders is really no control at all; it was designed for a time when all society was differently organized and much simpler. There is no reason why voting power in shareholders should be unwieldy were the companies reasonably small, and there is no reason why voting on all major proposals should not be done by post. Here comes in the difficulty, as there must come in all these things, of degree. Which proposals are so important that the opinion of the shareholders must be taken? With a good distribution of property and a habit of well distributed shareholding and a growth of small units, common sense would soon decide this on its largest lines.

Take a case of which the lines in the main (as I remember them) were these: Some years ago a company with a very large number of shareholders was got hold of by an "operator" (to use the euphemism he himself affected). It was a company owning many hotels. He "controlled" it, if I remember aright, by the method which I have given in simplified form above. He did not personally own the bulk of the interest. He even indirectly controlled but a very small fraction of it. But his control was absolute. His own business in life happened to be the sale of furniture–whether it was his direct business as a manufacturer or whether he had got it through yet another series of operations I forget. At any rate, he started to make the hotels in question furnish themselves completely to his advantage–to purchase furniture they did not need at higher prices than they should have paid–in order to fill his own pockets. In that case the thing was exposed and widely talked about because the "operator" made some technical mistake or other which enabled his victims to bring him into court. But it is a model of the kind of thing flourishing on all sides in a thousand different forms, which, if it proceeds unchecked, makes the good distribution and security of shareholding impossible.

To all these propositions it will be replied, of course, that they are impracticable. The whole structure of the modern world renders this so. The evil is now mature, it has taken firm root, it has developed in all its complications. You could not undo even a part of it without a crash—even if you had despotic power; and to hope to do so without despotic power is plainly chimerical. You would never get opinion to move—for opinion has been formed in the very atmosphere of that which you are trying to destroy.

To this I answer, first, that our effort at restoring property does not aim at perfection nor even at any large universal upheaval of the existing system. It aims at making a beginning. Just as in the case of the craftsman we know that we cannot put him back where he was before ugly and imperfect things turned out mechanically began to oust his much better forms of production; just as we cannot hope to see in our time the great stores disappear and the lesser and much more useful shopkeepers take their place; just as we cannot even hope, probably, for any very large curtailment—at any rate for some considerable time—of the pernicious chain store system, so we cannot quickly and on a large scale remedy share-shuffling. But, as in the case both of the distributor and the craftsman, we can make a beginning. We can plant a seed and we must hope that that seed will grow.

Such should be our aims in the matter of shareholding in industrial concerns, in the size of their units and the curtailment of irresponsible control of those units.

And I would add that in the whole process a very powerful factor making for success would be the public knowledge of how much is held and by whom, and a continued attack upon that secrecy which is half the evil of the present state of affairs.

Secondly, I would answer, what I fear may seem paradoxical (I have already said it in a past article), that the effort to be made not only does not attempt completion, not only will be satisfied with beginnings, but will very probably fail even in such a very limited field. The forces against even the partial success of such an attempt are ubiquitous and highly organized, and what is worse they have become instinctive, they are taken for granted as the natural air of society.

The reform proposed is not easy, even on a small scale, but, once more, the excuse for attempting it is that the alternative is clear. Either we restore property or we restore slavery, to which we have already gone more than half-way in our industrialized societies. I do not say that slavery, whether to a very rich man or group of men or the State, is a bad thing, or a good thing. I only say that, without well distributed property, freedom cannot be; and that, if we leave things as they are, slavery must come.

(To be continued)

REVIEWS

Section Versus State

THERE can be little doubt that future generations of history students will increasingly pay homage to the late Professor Frederick Jackson Turner for the most realistic and, therefore, most revolutionary view of American history that has yet been presented. For many years ago Professor Turner was the first to point out that the forward movement of the Western Frontier from the close of the war of 1812-14, to the ending of the frontier in 1890, dictated, consciously or unconsciously, the whole course of American history; and now, in these essays,* gathered together after his death, he shows conclusively and triumphantly that the American Union was not a union primarily of States, or even of political parties and qualities, but a far subtler and more flexible thing, a union of sections and sectional interests.

As he shows, at the time of the Revolution there were already three sections in being: the New England colonies, prevailingly mercantile and industrial; the Southern Seaboard colonies, agrarian and aristocratic; and the middle section of New York, Pennsylvania, possibly Delaware and Maryland, acting as a buffer state between these two. Other sections have been added later, and the main political effort, in Professor Turner's view, of American political parties has been the preservation of the "balance of power" between them. In this view, the course of events from the Missouri Compromise to the Civil War assumes new meaning. Notably, the Civil War itself only begins to make sense when we realize, as Professor Turner does, that it was a conflict not between States, but between two sections, whose divergence in political and social attitude made war the inevitable result. The South, it is true, invoked the doctrine of the State rights to justify secession; but that doctrine, as Professor Turner conclusively points out, has never possessed any validity unless it was used as a weapon, not by separate States, but by united sections. The reason, he might have added, why the South did not make good its challenge was precisely because it was not united enough. The Confederacy died of State rights, as Professor Owsley of Vanderbilt has wisely and wittily said.

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* THE INFLUENCE OF SECTIONS IN AMERICAN HISTORY *by Frederick Jackson Turner, with an Introduction by Max Farrand* (HOLT. 347; $3.50.)

We in America—despite Henry Ford and other Mid-westerners who think of America merely as a place for exercising their ingenuity at money-making—are extremely historically-minded; and we have produced some very excellent historians. But if we cast our eye back on many of them, we must admit the fact that hitherto our histories have tended to be written far too much from the point of view of certain political theories and far too little from the point of view of the people themselves, who were not one, but many. We have tended to follow the bad example set by Macaulay, who made of his history a paean to the Whig party. Even so intelligent a historian as Henry Adams was unable to see the true value of a man like Jefferson, because of atavistic Federalist prepossessions. And when we come to the period following the Civil War, it is far worse. Everyone should know how far a presumably honest historian like Rhodes distorted facts and miswrote history, because of the illusion that the Industrial North and the Republican Party were equally and always right in the Reconstruction period. Fortunately, this type of history is now being less frequently written; but we have not as yet, nor are likely to have for years to come, our John Richard Green, to give us a history of the whole American people.

The type of history that we write is one that the best English historians have long since abandoned; they realize, and with justice, that the manufacturing and industrial North and Midlands of England have been in perpetual strife with the conservative, mercantile, agrarian, and seafaring South ever since the close of the eighteenth century; with Scotland, Highland or Lowland, a third party to the quarrel. We are still bemused and bepuzzled enough by that classic abstraction, the "Union", to think that history is a record of that "Union", or with the Charles A. Beard school, to define history as a record of successful engineering, invention, and mass-industrialism. But underneath unions and industrial enterprises there are always people, and people are not like figures in a ledger, or debit and credit columns in an account-book. They are beings acted upon continually by the sun, the soil, the wind, the rain, and by the persistent habits of mind which these engender: irrational hatreds and impossible loyalties. Professor Turner was aware of that fact; he was almost the first American historian to be fully aware of it. And so he pointed out that only in the study of the sections and their interests and interactions could the secret of American history be found.

We in this country are singularly proud of and sensitive to our destiny, which is to be Americans; but if you ask any of us the apparently simple question, "What is an American?" the answer is not so readily found. It follows that the term "American Union" is equally an abstraction. As a matter of fact, the country we happen to inhabit is so vast, so diverse in climate, appearance, soil, people, that we were almost obliged from the outset to invent some such abstraction in order to be a people at all. When we think of the United States we think in terms of a map; we do not think in terms of Puritans in Massachusetts, Church of Englanders and Methodists in the South, Germans in the Middle West, Scandinavians in the Northwest, Spanish and Indians in New Mexico. In fact we elevate the map, with its criss-cross railways and roads, the flag with its stars, the concept of the Union with its concomitant superstition that so many millions died in 1861-65 in order that it might be preserved, into the dimensions of national symbols—I might almost say national dogmas. There is no foundation whatsoever for those dogmas. They avail us nothing when the top-heavy structure of industrialism which they support begins to fall down, as it has ever since 1929. To accept symbols when the symbols correspond to underlying realities is one thing; to accept them, when they are mere phantoms corresponding to no reality, is quite another. Why we even adopted such vicious habits of thought remains a mystery. Possibly we wished to save ourselves from thinking too deeply on the fact that we are not one people, but many; possibly the baneful influence of classic German metaphysics may have tainted our minds. But the fact is, that we are, and have always been, a country of sections; even at the time of the Civil War. And only our sentimentality, aided by industrial capitalism, has ever forbidden us to be fully aware of the fact.

Nor is there any reason to suppose that our inherent sectionalism will become less so, because the Federal Government has been increasingly obliged since 1893 to take more power into its own hands. Indeed, Professor Turner, in the last essays in this volume, expressly combats such a supposition. He points out that it was precisely the increasing vigour of the Federal Government as expressed under Theodore Roosevelt's administration that led to the La Follette Progressive movement among the Middlewestern and Northwestern farmers, and kept Bryanism alive in the Democratic Party; he might have added, had he lived to do so, that the vast revivification of Federal power that we are witnessing under another Roosevelt, will inevitably lead to increased self-consciousness among the sections. The paradox of American statesmanship and history is this: the more the Washington administration attempts to deal equitably and justly with all sections of its vast domain, the more the sections tend to become independent, self-sufficing, self-conscious entities; the more it resigns itself to a *laissez-faire* attitude, as was the case in the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover period, the more sectional differences tend to be obliterated, to become moribund and such abstractions as the "Union", "Americanism", "prosperity", "normalcy" rule the land.

Such a view as Professor Turner put forward has therefore the unique merit of being highly "unpatriotic"; American patriotism being evidently, in its hundred-per-cent variety, another abstraction; being, in fact, something like a face-cream which can be applied to the countenances of all Americans indiscriminately. That such a book as Professor Turner's should be published, is at least another symptom that the Harding-Coolidge-Hoover period is over, and that we are in for something different; for a conception of patriotism that begins with one's own backyard and thence goes forth to embrace the world and the universe, rather than one invented by successful industrialists and their allies, the bankers, to camouflage their depredations on the body politic. The period in American history when it was necessary for the few remaining souls who wished to be honest, to travel increasingly along the path chosen by Moscow or else capitulate, body and soul, to the "rugged individualism" of *laissez-faire*, is now ended: let us hope for good. Either President Roosevelt will be measurably successful and will produce again, as a result, the happily disunited States; or he will fail, with the result of a deeper reaction towards the ideals of Harding, with their stress on his conception of "what is central and normal in human experience", which may result in open anarchy and mass civil war. These are our alternatives; and it is to be hoped that Professor Turner was correct in stating, as he does, that what we resemble most is, in racial variousness, and political give-and-take, the "United States of Europe", that dream of certain nineteenth-century spirits which European nationalisms have utterly thwarted, but which here and perhaps here alone can find its fullest and freest and most glorious impetus and development.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

Mr. Strachey's "Fascism"

IN MARCH of this year there was issued in England a document which defined in specific terms the policy toward both Communism and Capitalism that the main body of British Labour proposes henceforth to pursue. It was entitled "Democracy v. Dictatorship: British Labour's Call to the People". It was issued by a National Joint Council representing the British Trades Union Congress, the Labour Party, and the Parliamentary Labour Party. And it aroused sufficient mistrust and foreboding in the mind of one of the more articulate of the younger British Marxists, Mr. John Strachey, to cause him to write a book about it.*

This new policy of British Labour may be summed up as a reaffirmation of belief in democracy as opposed to dictatorship whether Fascist or Communist, and in the possibility of achieving the objectives of Socialism by Constitutional means. Mr. Strachey believes that it will lead "with mathematical certainty" to the "defeat, ruin, and massacre" of the British working man before a "terroristic and violent" Capitalist

* **THE MENACE OF FASCISM** ***by John Strachey*** **(GOLLANCZ. 280 pp. 5/-). To be published in the United States by Farrar & Rinehart.**

attack that is bound to come. He chooses to call this terroristic and violent Capitalist attack by the name of "Fascism"; and his book is devoted to explaining to the British workman why he is putting himself at the mercy of "Fascism", and why "Fascism" is bad.

Over the first point (it actually forms the latter third of the book) we need not linger, except to say that it includes an interesting account of the foundation of Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists from the viewpoint of one who used to be Sir Oswald's Parliamentary Private Secretary, and a parable —drawn from the post-War experience of the German Social-Democrats— of the frightful things that happen to labour parties that make concessions to the established order. It has little immediate interest for American readers.

The second point, however, is worth discussing. It consists of a hundred and fifty pages of condemnation of this "Fascism" which menaces not only the British worker but the world at large; and Mr. Strachey's effort is all too likely to serve as a model for the anti-Fascist polemicists who will spring up in America before many months are gone.

This method by which Marxists may readily dispose of "Fascism" is based upon a simple formula. The first requirement is to know nothing whatever of Italian Fascism except what one can glean from the text of Fascist laws such as the Labour Charter, from a collection of excerpts from the speeches of Mussolini, from one rather lyric and therefore easily ridiculed English book defining Fascism in sympathetic terms, and from the writings of other Marxist critics. The second requirement is to equate Italian Fascism, thus conceived, with German Hitlerism, and for that matter with any anti-Marxist manifestation anywhere which shows the faintest signs of life.

Mr. Strachey applies this formula with gusto and dismaying single-mindedness. He begins with twenty-seven pages devoted entirely to quotations from the British press describing the "atrocities", chiefly against Jews, committed by "Fascism" in Germany. (This is calculated to produce in the reader an emotional reaction against anything which is later termed "Fascist", when Mr. Strachey will be seen entirely to ignore the fact that Italians are rather fond of Jews.) He then devotes a chapter to pointing out that "Fascism" is the "deadly and remorseless enemy of the whole progressive movement" represented by the traditional liberalism of the nineteenth century. (This is designed to swing over those who have not yet begun to question the virtues of that liberalism, and for whom any opposing force can therefore be disposed of as "reactionary".) Then comes a chapter which puts the question: "Why, since our technical facilities for progress and betterment have increased, do we find our democratic and progressive movements in decay?" (The query is left to be answered in a later chapter devoted to the orthodox Socialist thesis that modern methods of production and private ownership of the means of production are incompatible. This is designed to make the liberal look about him a little guiltily and wonder whether or not liberalism is sufficient; perhaps Socialism is what is really required.) Finally come five chapters devoted to building up a definition of "Fascism" that would strike terror to the heart not only of liberals but of any mortal man.

"Fascism", under Mr. Strachey's facile pen, here takes on startling form. First, it inevitably means war. (This chapter is plentifully interlarded with "war" quotations from the wilder Hitlerites and from Mussolini's earlier days, including one from the latter in which the carefully omitted conclusion patently indicates that the Italian Premier was not talking about military war at all.) Second, "Fascism's" economic claims are all "pure bluff". (The Corporate State in Italy exists only on paper, says this critic who judges it entirely by its paper manifestations—except that it does remove the worker's inalienable right to strike. Besides, there are a number of Italians out of work.) Third, "Fascism" cannot plan, for it is manifestly impossible to plan "so long as the means of production are left in separate, individual hands". (For Mr. Strachey, apparently, property must be either completely at the mercy of the individual owner or else in the hands of the State; any conception of ownership as limited by function or duty—surely a common enough experience—escapes him, as well as any knowledge of the immense blocks of industrial securities owned by the Italian State.) What Fascism can do, however, is to wreck the workers' organizations. (This conclusion is easily reached on the principle that when a workers' organization is Socialist it is a workers' organization, but when it is Fascist it is not.) Fourth, since "Fascism" protects private property, and since "private ownership of the means of production is incompatible with our modern power to produce", the aim of "Fascism" is to "destroy our power to produce". (And by a pretty ingenious method, too, if Mr. Strachey is to be believed; nothing so simple as going back to small units of production; for what "Fascism" is apparently going to do is first to *increase* our technical facilities—in order later to wage wars in which they will be destroyed!) In sum, "Fascism" is "the movement for the preservation by violence, and at all costs, of the private ownership of the means of production"; it is "the militant arm of the largest property owners"; and the rank and file of the "Fascist" parties are no more than "hired mercenaries for the defence of the ownership of factories, fields, and mines by the great Capitalists". Here indeed will be news for the Black Shirts of 1925 and 1926; as well as for the aspiring capitalists of Italy today.

Confronted with such a monster, it is impossible in the short space of a review to do much more than point out that another view is possible; that if one should refuse to equate German Hitlerism with Italian Fascism, or should happen not to believe in Marxist doctrines, Fascism would become quite a different thing from Mr. Strachey's version of it; and that the possibility that Mr. Strachey's readers may not dream of that other version is a sign of the poisoned atmosphere in which we live. The sound argument for true Fascism is an argument from morals. The best argument for Socialism is an argument from material conditions. The true Fascist says: "It is worth making such and such material sacrifices to assure such and such a moral situation." The true Socialist (or Communist) says: "It is worth making such and such moral sacrifices in order to bring about such and such material conditions"—if indeed he admits the validity of morals in these matters at all. This means, of course, that the appeal of Fascism is a remote one, like the appeal of the Churches; whereas the appeal of Socialism is immediate, like the appeal of the Devil. And it explains in large part—as Mr. Strachey's book may indicate—why the Socialist's appeal to the populace is as transitory as it is effective.

MARVIN MCCORD LOWES

The Family As Critic

LAST year a book appeared in England with the innocent title of *Fiction and the Reading Public.** It is safe to say that no other of the season's books caused more of a stir than this one. It was denounced, defended, applauded, vilified, rebutted, and confirmed. Critics heretofore noted for their geniality were suddenly discovered to have vitriol on the shelf if occasion arose, and Constant Readers from all the walks of fiction-reading wrote letters to editors.

When a book arouses so much controversy in England, America may usually look to have its own edition within a few weeks. But a year has passed and no American publisher is yet known to have the book on his list, nor is there any rumour that its American equivalent will soon be with us. This is too bad. *Fiction and the Reading Public* has its faults; if anything its faults outnumber its virtues; but American literature would be, I believe, in a healthier state if we had a few Mrs. Leavises to stir up an occasional hornet's nest for us. Let them be never so acid and confused, and devoted to some causes that are better lost; at least they would bring us the experience of honest controversy—which seems vanished today from our letters. The smug complacency of our novelists, publishers, and critics would be displaced for a time, if only by indignation, and perhaps some livelier moving of the blood would bring us sturdier novels.

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* FICTION AND THE READING PUBLIC *by Q. D. Leavis* (CHATTO & WINDUS. 350 pp. 12/6).

It is true that the book confines itself as far as possible to the state of novel writing and novel reading in England, but no publisher need feel that Americans would be indifferent to it. Aside from the fact that American fiction and American publishing requirements are anathema to Mrs. Leavis, the situation she describes fits this country as snugly as it fits her own. We are, if anything, in an even graver state than the English so far as being overrun by bad writing, venal criticism, and high-pressure book advertising is concerned, and we have even fewer serious men and women of letters to oppose the tide of mediocrity. It seems certain that Mrs. Leavis's book would find a wide, even if irritable, audience here, and that our publishers are being too tender of our feelings.

Fiction and the Reading Public, then, is a bulky book in three parts. The first is a survey of the contemporary situation: a consideration of the book market in England, the "middlemen" of fiction, and a last subdivision called "Author and Reader", in which Mrs. Leavis reports the returns from a somewhat brutal questionnaire which she sent to various authors. The second part is a short historical survey of fiction in England, from the birth of journalism through the halcyon period of the eighteenth century and down to the disintegration, both of letters and of the reading public, in our own day.

The third section is undoubtedly the most important in Mrs. Leavis's eyes, for in it she draws her conclusions, and they are by no means temperate or consolatory. We ruin our writers and in turn are ruined by them so that we slip lower and lower into the slime of sensationalism, easy optimism, false "psychologizing", and sentimentality. Novelists and journalists of the Northcliffe stamp have catered to the public's complacency till our literature has settled on a self-satisfied middle-class plane which not only resents sound innovation, but is alarmed by the mere threat of seriousness in its authors. The very vocabulary which a writer of today must use is so shoddy and superficial that no good work can be done in it. And so on and on; yet the fact that the tone of the book rises till it becomes a shrill jeremiad and then sinks to a courageous pathos that is not without its comic note does not alter the inescapable fact that Mrs. Leavis is very often right. The state of letters today is fully as grave as Mrs. Leavis represents it. Detachment is looked upon, by the general reader, with suspicion, as revealing snobbery; violent assault, not only on the emotions but actually on the nerves, is looked upon as high art ("*vide*", as Mrs. Leavis says much too often, the esteem in which the novels of Mr. Faulkner are held today). The movies and fiction play back and forth into each other's hands, sometimes openly, sometimes more subtly. The moving-picture theatre is the church of the modern adolescent, the novel his Bible, and he turns to his tabloid newspaper for the Lesson of the Day. Nor is the adolescent the only one who is cheated by a shoddy literature; there is not an adult in England or America who is not in some way exploited by the state of the press.

Observing this, and having been elected to the Ottilie Hancock research fellowship of Girton College, Mrs. Leavis set about the task of making others aware of our sorry pass. Neither the academic approach to investigating current literature, nor the method of literary criticism seemed satisfactory for her purposes. She soon found herself, she tells us in her introduction, "committed to a method of investigation which I prefer to describe as 'anthropological'. It consisted in examining all the material that seemed to bear on this question in an unbiassed but inquisitive frame of mind. . . ". And so she read current novels, collected opinions *viva voce* and by letter, catechized novelists, counted book-stores and newsagents' shops, to reach her conclusions.

No one realizes more completely than does Mrs. Leavis how far from the perfect document she has come, but she is quite right in considering that she has done an important service. As for "unbiassed"—well, that she was not; and how she could have written the word without stumbling over it is a mystery. As early as page 8 we find her writing of "the tuppenny dram-shops" of literature, but the actual bias is far deeper than a mere fastidious dislike of vulgar best-sellers. Before the reader has gone very far he discovers that Mrs. Leavis wants a state of society in which these writers (and these writers alone) may flourish and bring forth fruit: D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, T. F. Powys, E. M. Forster, and James Joyce. It is as an admirer and defender of them that she writes her book; and it is largely because they are her gods and masters that her book is, instead of a stirring triumph, an impressure failure.

For Mrs. Leavis was on the verge of saying a very true and necessary thing, but she missed it, or left it half-said; and it is impossible not to feel that she fell into a vital inconsistency through the warmth of her admiration for these five novelists. Her study of the contemporary novel is acid to the point of shrewishness, but that is forgivable. What is truly serious is that with the material in her hands to drive home the crucial truth of the matter—that the family as the censor of fiction and the stronghold of literature cannot be displaced if we are to have sound letters—she missed it, she slipped too lightly over it, for not even her fervour could lead her to imagine the *paterfamilias* reading aloud to his little flock the novels of Lawrence, of Powys, of Forster, Joyce, or Mrs. Woolf.

Yet in the second section of her book, where the real worth of her work lies, she herself emphasizes the value to an author of the knowledge that his book is to be bought by a thrifty man who knows the value of his money; that it must compete with the other interests of a life which is full, varied, and self-contained; that it must stand the test of being read aloud in the family assembly, and that the author who offends decency, discretion, or due reticence under such circumstances will soon either die of starvation or turn to other work. And with real insight she draws the contrasting picture of today's reader: working monotonously for an indifferent employer, dismissed after a day of routine to a rented room or to a "home" which is little more than a single roof over a disunited family, easy prey to any purveyor of diversion who will not overtax his energy or attention. The book he reads to fill his dull evening will be read in solitude. The sentences may lumber and jerk; the philosophy will not be criticized by the members of a group, it will be accepted or ignored. The fatuousness that reading aloud would reveal pitilessly may not even be realized; even actual indecencies will cause little embarrassment. If a book can give the poor haphazard life the illusion of unity by telling over again the story of a favourite movie, or if the novel continues from night to night in the evening's paper, it will satisfy its reader that much the more.

All this Mrs. Leavis has seen, and reported—sometimes with sympathy, sometimes with contempt. It is easy to picture her fury at being thought as sad a victim of her period as those readers who do not belong to the "minority" of which she is a member. Such writers as Joyce, Woolf, Lawrence, are eccentric in the truest meaning of the word, and as symptomatic of the evils of our present civilization. Our modern Gomorrah does not deserve to be spared because of the presence of these five just men. Mrs. Leavis and the little group of which she is so articulate a member may work like beavers (as indeed they do; no less than four books have been issued in the past year to reinforce Mrs. Leavis's standards) to bring about a state in which the writers of their choice may flourish; salvation will not come from that quarter. If we are to labour for a state in which their work will be conceded to be the standard of excellence we shall labour in vain. But there are other writers whom Mrs. Leavis dismisses with contumely, authors who, in her eyes, support "herd-prejudice", who "start from the assumption that the reader, like the writer, is passionately in favour of the Christian ethic, the accepted social and moral code, family affection, altruism and self-sacrifice". She is a witness to the gentiles that they still exist. To the weary modern reader, sick to death of anti-religious prejudice, of subversive social and moral standards, of records of family hatred and morbid self-expression, the terms of Mrs. Leavis's contempt sound like rumours of Paradise.

Nevertheless, for all its absurdities *Fiction and the Reading Public* should be read in this country. No one could find it dull; occasionally it is more amusing than Mrs. Leavis would believe possible. I found myself reading these lines with a joy which grew in proportion to my bewilderment: "One notices the ease and simplicity of the writing, the air of good breeding which presents the extraordinary as a matter of course"; the book is full of such indications of the "finer standards" which Mrs. Leavis would like to force upon us. She flings her charges of dishonesty, of stupidity, of downright imbecility left and right. But at least she challenges us to stop and think for a while of the evils of our civilization and our literature.

If by a happy chance *Fiction and the Reading Public* should stimulate some one of our sound younger critics—such, for instance, as Alan Reynolds Thompson, Harry Hayden Clark, or any one of a dozen men who would not fall into the error of confusing eccentricity with excellence—to write an American equivalent, we might receive one of the most valuable books of the generation.

DOROTHEA BRANDE

The Locke Connection

IN THE first section of this book,* Mr. Keynes gives us some brilliant pen portraits of the chief figures at the Versailles Conference. In the second section his scope is wider—an exposition of the solidarity and continuity of the High Intelligentsia of England; and it is here that he makes a contribution of permanent value to the history of English economic doctrine.

Mr. Keynes believes that in intellectual lineage the leaders of English thought are hardly less interbred and spiritually intermixed than the great political families of the country. Thus

> there is also a pride of sentiment to claim spiritual kinship with the Locke Connection and that long English line, intellectually and humanly linked to one another, to which the names in my second section belong.

By way of illustration of this thesis he takes up the biographical study of Malthus, Marshall, Edgeworth, and Frank Ramsey. Running through the lives of these four thinkers, from the birth of Malthus in 1766 to the untimely death of Ramsey at twenty-six years of age in 1930, there is apparent to Keynes the golden thread of the Locke Connection. So we are presented, if not with a closely-knit system of philosophy peculiar to England, at least with a definite tradition that is claimed to have persisted in English thought over a period of nearly two hundred years.

Quite the best essay in the book is that on Thomas Robert Malthus, the Cambridge economist whose

* ESSAYS IN BIOGRAPHY *by John Maynard Keynes* (HARCOURT, BRACE. 318 pp. $2.50).

name was destined to become a symbol in the realm of social dynamics. He was a student at Jesus College, where his tutor was one of Paley's old pupils. Indeed, Paley's *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy* was published in Malthus's first year at the University (1785) and is esteemed by Keynes as having been of notable constructive value in the intellectual development of the author of the *Essay on Population.* Of the Malthusian treatise our author says:

> It is profoundly in the English tradition of humane science, the tradition which is suggested by the names of Locke, Hume, Adam Smith, Paley, Bentham, Darwin, and Mill, a tradition marked by a love of truth and a most noble lucidity, by a prosaic sanity free from sentiment or metaphysic. It is in this company that Malthus belongs.

The Locke Connection is further emphasized in the monograph on Alfred Marshall, whose youthful mind, we are told, was propelled in the direction of the science of economics by an intellectual urge compounded of metaphysical agnosticism, evolutionary progress, and the utilitarian ethics of the generation which preceded his undergraduate years at Cambridge. Edgeworth, although primarily an Oxford man, followed the same road, being led through ethics into the newer field of economic study.

Frank Ramsey, whose theories on formal logic and on the philosophy of probability are briefly illustrated in this book by short extracts from his writings, is acclaimed as belonging to the same order of philosophical knighthood. Keynes says that he reminds one of Hume more than of any one else, particularly in his common sense and in a sort of hard-headed practicality towards the whole business of philosophy. Our author goes even further, suggesting that Ramsey was far too practical for what he calls "the tormenting exercises of the foundations of thought and psychology, where the mind tries to catch its own tail". Flippancy of this sort comes as a shock to the serious reader of the book. One would hardly have expected such a cheap sneer at philosophical studies from the living representative of the noble tradition of English thought.

Now, it is a matter of the history of philosophy that English thought takes its origin, not primarily from Locke, but from the Cartesian revolt against the traditional philosophy of the ages. We should have expected, therefore, to read of the Cartesian strain rather than of the Locke Connection. Descartes was the first thinker in the West to break the epistemological contact with reality, the first to disrupt the metaphysical continuity between the mind and the thing. Divorcing ideas from things, he pointed the way to an ultimate denial of all reality.

Locke simply took up the work of destruction where Descartes had left off. The English thinker rejected what he called the secondary qualities of things, the qualities apprehended by a single sense only—colours, savours, sounds, odours, heat and cold. He held that conceptual thought, working on the primary qualities of things, is adequate to the task of achieving knowledge. Berkeley, whose name happens to be omitted from Mr. Keynes's list, improved on Locke. He rejected even the primary qualities, such as extension, shape, and motion, all the mechanical properties by which physical bodies seem to influence one another. He annihilated the substance of the body itself.

Hume, following Locke and Berkeley, proceeded to destroy the self, reducing everything to mere fugitive feelings or sensations. In the end he reached a profound scepticism, which affected not only the content of his teaching but even his own subjective state of mind. Here is what he himself thought about his philosophical achievement: "I am affrighted and confounded with that forlorn solitude in which I am placed by my philosophy. When I return to these speculations, they appear so cold and strained and ridiculous that I cannot find in my heart to enter them further."

Our actual heritage from all this is the philosophy of modern idealism, which proceeds on the axiom that the mind is incapable of all direct experience of the non-mental. Unable to cross the frontiers of our own private consciousness, we can never know things-in-themselves. What is usually called truth is something we can never achieve. To the idealist, truth is not something necessarily imposed on the mind from without, not something conditioned by external reality, not something based and founded in the concrete order of things. He holds the totality of things in the concrete to be scientifically unknowable.

What the common man calls the real world is interpreted by modern idealism as nothing else than a system of logically reasoned, abstract relations. These relations are spoken of by the idealists as objective. But the alleged objectivity is merely a phenomenal or intra-mental objectivity, an object of consciousness and nothing more.

Far different is the evaluation of reality offered by the traditional philosophy of the West. In the scholastic view, the truth of knowledge is the conformity of the mind judging about things, or of the mind's judgment about things, with the things to which the judgment refers. It is the *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, the equation of the mind and the thing. It implies three elements: the existence of a knower, the existence of a thing known, and the existence of a relation of conformity between these two terms. This is the definition of truth expressed by Aristotle, accepted by Aquinas, and elaborated by the scholastics. It proceeds from the philosophical axiom that the object of the knowing mind, while apprehended formally as abstract, is really and fundamentally existent and inherent in the concrete object of sense.

To bring the record up to date, it is well to notice that the Louvain school has evolved a definition of logical truth which answers the requirements of the idealists. As worded by the late Cardinal Mercier, this definition considers truth as a certain relation of identity between the thing presented to the mind and an ideal previously known to the mind. But this ideal type of the thing is ultimately derived from reality and has its basic and concrete foundation in the given of sense-experience. In other words, the modern scholastic, like his brother of the thirteenth century, follows Aristotle in his refusal to ignore the concrete.

All this may seem somewhat wide of the mark in discussing the work of an author whose chief claim to our attention lies in his standing as an economist and whose biographical excursions should be cordially welcomed for their literary charm. Certainly, in anything like a complete survey of the book, it would be nothing more than mere justice to dwell on its first section, which consists of essays pertaining to the principal personages of the Versailles Conference; in those brilliant essays the author does a series of verbal portraits which are remarkable alike for their allurement of style and for their keenness of observation.

But throughout the whole book, and particularly where he studies human lives against the background of economics, the author tends to allow his pen to wander from his chosen subject into matters affecting philosophical thought. In the very nature of the case, this is almost inevitable; because economics cannot be ultimately divorced from ethics, from psychology, from epistemology, from the very metaphysics of being. In the blots that then fall on the pages of even so gifted a writer on economics as Mr. Keynes, the discerning reader may find a clue to the historical causes of the hideous economic chaos into which our civilization has fallen and to the helplessness of our accredited economists in face of the crisis which besets the modern man.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

Authority and Reason

ALREADY known as a specialist on the period by reason of his monographs on Lanfranc, Bérenger, and Hildebrand, Dr. Macdonald in this book* sets himself to the historical treatment of questions rather than persons. Limiting himself to three centuries, from the ninth to the eleventh, he sees the whole Caroling phase as a time which

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* AUTHORITY AND REASON IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES *by A. J. Macdonald* (OXFORD. 131 pp. $2.00)

> left open the field for criticism of the growing body of theological tradition, by any who chose to follow reason rather than authority. Moreover, the field for individual thought and the exercise of reason was broadened, as well as kept open, by the attitude of the Caroling emperors and their successors. John the Scot's work, which was anathematized in later centuries, passed unscathed, though not uncriticized, in his own day.

This is a change from the attitude of Gibbon, who is primarily responsible for the erroneous tradition that throughout the whole period of the Middle Ages the repressive legislation of religion exercised a tyranny over human reason. In recent years the study of mediaeval philosophy has yielded such wealth of scholarship that no modern student would be foolish enough to believe that the mind of Europe was held in bondage for a thousand years, from the triumph of Christianity over classical paganism to the revolt of Protestantism against Catholic Christianity; from the fall of the Roman Empire in the West to the fall of the Roman Empire in the East.

For the mediaeval order of society was never as consistent, as undisturbed, or as complete as it looks to us when given a false unity by our own remoteness from it. It was not a period when men kept on saying the same things or thinking the same thoughts for any appreciable length of time. On the contrary, argument and criticism never ceased. Absolute uniformity of thought was unknown. In this book one sees a remarkable difference between the mentality of

John the Scot in the ninth century and the mentality of Anselm in the tenth, between the fetters which tended to cripple thought in the eleventh century and the relative freedom accorded to Aquinas and the theologians of the thirteenth. It was a period of intense mental activity, which issued often in philosophical differences which were irreconcilable.

The author's scope is to describe the gradual creation of authority as an instrument of theological interpretation which was pointed and sharpened with increasing refinement as the centuries passed. In the beginning of his chosen period he finds thought in free and unchallenged possession. His main thesis is that it was never quite dispossessed. And he is at pains to prove that, both within and without the Church, there has always existed a strand of teaching and an attitude of mind in which the reason of the individual man is prepared to receive directly the Word of God in Scripture or in personal revelation independently of the aggression of authority. Explicitly he proclaims himself as holding the brief for Evangelicalism. While this element of partisanship is no blot on the scholarship of the book, it tends to make the reader unduly critical and suspicious of the various stages of the author's argument.

Dr. Macdonald endeavours to plot the curve of philosophico-theological thought as to the act of faith. Whence comes the authority or sanction for regarding the act of faith as an act of reason? Augustine's view of the matter was, we are told, that the human reason possesses a twofold character and operates at two different points in the process of rationalizing the act of faith: it has a perceptive function which precedes faith, and an analytic and synthetic function which follows faith. On this point Augustine approaches the old notion of the Greek apologists to the effect that human reason is a portion of divine reason imparted by God, a notion that led to the conception of the Logos as the revelation of divine reason.

Then our author discusses Pope Gregory the Great (died in 604) who held that an act of faith is rational, because to believe what you cannot explain is an act of reason. Next he comes to John the Scot in the ninth century and to his teaching that the intellect functions by intuition, whereby the soul rises to the concept of God, an ascent which is possible only with the aid of divine grace. "Thus the only spiritual achievement of man—the perception of the notion of God—is a gift which comes down from God, it is grace operating upon spiritual intuition. It is the parallel to the *theophania* by which the primordial ideas are conveyed to the reason, a theory which is being affirmed today by Barth and Brunner."

This mode of argument, wherein a point is conceived as running along the path of an ellipse and coming back to its original locus, can often be made to prove several things. Dr. Macdonald starts from the Augustinian concept of faith, moves through Gregory the Great, to Scotus Erigena, to Anselm, to Abelard, to Barth and Brunner, and then finds that he is back at the point whence he started. Duhem in his *Système du monde* and Bett in his *Johannes Scotus Erigena* use the same style of argument to prove that the scholasticism of Aquinas was simply the earlier scholasticism of John the Scot. They claim that it is almost a certainty that Avicebron, the eleventh-century Jewish philosopher of Saragossa, depended to a considerable extent on the Scot; they also claim that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon the influence which this Avicebron exerted upon the later Schoolmen. But their argument is brought up sharply by the question which Bett himself asks: why did the Church condemn the teaching of John the Scot while it made the teaching of Aquinas the standard of Catholic philosophical thought?

To answer this question, which affects the whole history of philosophical thought in the Middle Ages, it must be borne in mind that there are two principal strands running through all of the mediaeval philosophy. There is a Platonic mysticism, which may be characterized as the Augustinian strand; this held the field more or less until the thirteenth century when Aristotle had been welcomed into the commonwealth of Western thought by the Dominicans. Side by side with this Neoplatonism there had existed throughout the whole period a rationalistic strand, a qualified realism which, even in the period discussed in this book, was beginning to make its bid for recognition. It was Anselm of Canterbury (died in 1109) who made the first sign.

Anselm pointed to the new scholasticism by espousing the programme of Augustine, *credo ut intelligam.* I believe in order that I may understand. I stand on the platform of faith in order that I may see further into the content of faith by means of my human reason. Hugo of St. Victor (died 1141), Robert of Melun (died 1167), Richard of St. Victor (died 1173), Simon of Tournai (died about 1190), and William of Auxerre who lived into the thirteenth century—these were the men who handed on the thought from Anselm to Thomas Aquinas to the end that it was formulated more clearly and more explicitly from the standpoint of a truly philosophical concept of faith and knowledge. For when the message came to him, Aquinas was already being influenced by Aristotle.

The substitution of the scholastic Aristotelianism as the basis of Latin theology in place of the Augustinian Neoplatonism which Dr. Macdonald favours was the most far-reaching change that ever passed over mediaeval thought. It involved a new adjustment of the claims of reason and faith, a new emphasis upon the transcendence of God, a new interest in the material universe. Henceforth the human reason was to be assigned to a definite task in the search after divine truth. Aquinas was to show that the unaided human reason can achieve a knowledge of God's existence, that we can use the analogies of reason in order to render the mysteries more acceptable in some such way as Augustine employed analogy in his discussion of the Trinity, and that we can call upon our natural faculties to show that the arguments brought against the truths of faith are false or at least inconclusive.

It is Dr. Macdonald's conclusion that a strong Augustinian tradition existed all through the early Middle Ages until its defeat at Rome in 1079, when Bérenger was finally condemned. It is his further conclusion that, after many centuries of grappling with the problem and after many new postulates of its problems have been set up, examined, and abandoned, the modern man is being offered the old teaching by the school of Barth and Brunner. The clock has come round full circle. Plato and Aristotle are to meet again.

The book is scholarly and dispassionate for the most part, but ever and anon the cry of the disciple rings through its pages. Dr. Macdonald is anxious to save Neoplatonism for this unbelieving generation. One is reminded of Abelard's teaching that there is something divine in every noble thought; the kernel remains though the husk may perish. But Neoplatonism, as it has been known to Christian history, would seem to be a creed for the academic few rather than a gospel to be welcomed by the multitude.

JOHN A. SOUTHWELL